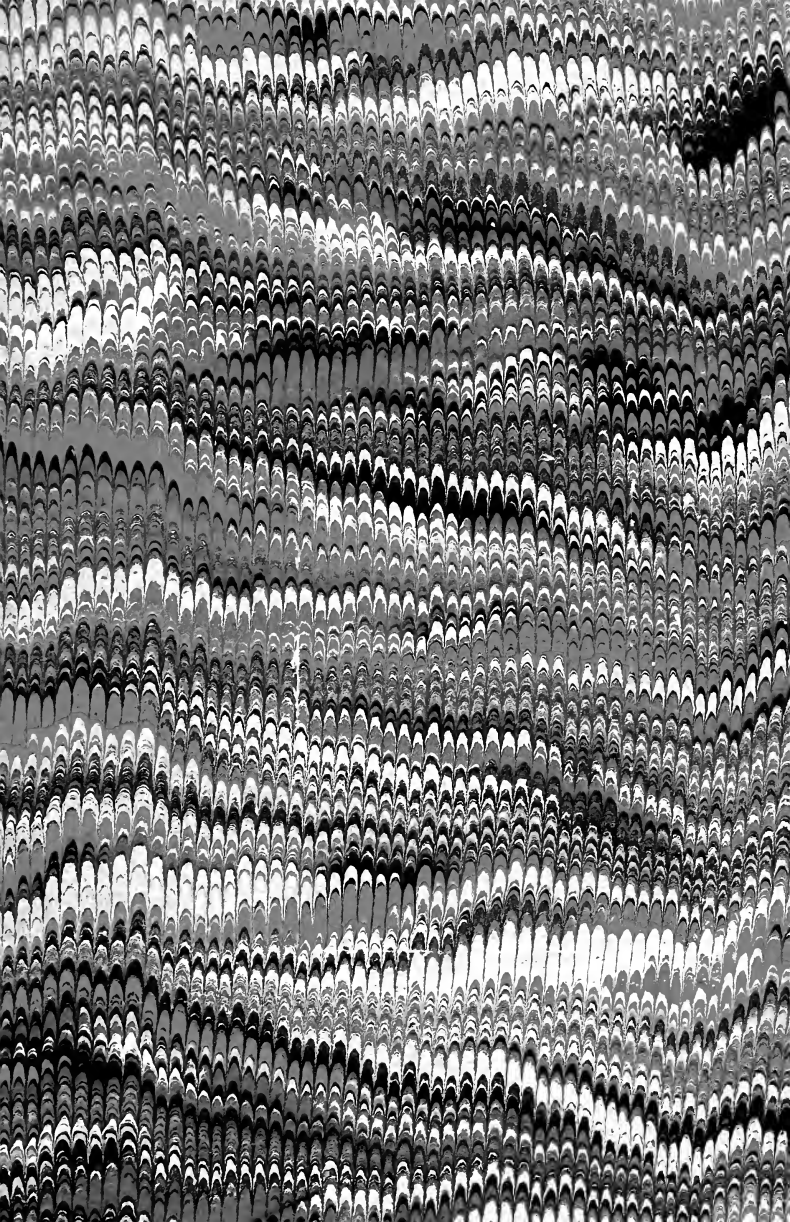


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REGINALD HASTINGS.



VOL. II.

REGINALD HASTINGS;

OR,

A TALE OF THE TROUBLES

IN 164—.

BY

ELIOT Warburton,

AUTHOR OF "THE CRESCENT AND THE CROSS,"

AND "MEMOIRS OF PRINCE RUPERT AND THE CAVALIERS."

"Fight on, thou brave true heart, and falter not, through dark fortune and through bright. The cause thou fightest for, so far as it is true—no farther, yet precisely so far—is very sure of victory; the falsehood of it alone will be abolished, as is ought to be."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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REGINALD HASTINGS.

CHAPTER I.

How say you?—My prisoner, or my guest?

SHAKESPEARE.

AFTER some hours' rest, Hugo was again summoned to take his place in the waggon; but this time another prisoner shared his straw, and another escort conducted him with an officer, who either could not, or would not give him any information as to his companion of the night before. That evening he was lodged in the Tower, having fallen under suspicion of privity to the unlucky plot.

I have before observed, that one of the pecu-

liarities of this civil war was the frequent absence of zeal on either side for the party outwardly professed. It seemed, as when some bridge has given way in the midst of a populous city, many of the inhabitants found themselves on the wrong side of the river, but were fain to stay there until they had some safe means of crossing over to their own.

Among these was the sub-lieutenant of the Tower, who had been handed over to the Roundhead Governor, with old guns, and pikes, and bows, as part of its armament. He discharged his duties honestly towards his new masters, as long as those duties did not appear to him to interfere directly with his allegiance to his old one. He was altogether a soldier of fortune, and serve he must; but he would have preferred to serve the King.

The present occasion was one of the rare instances in which a King's officer had been committed to his charge, and he provided for Hugo every comfort that was in his power to bestow; finally, he sent his respects to him, saying that he would be happy to pass an hour in his apart-

ment, after the gates were locked for the night. Accordingly, as the ominous old clock of the Tower sounded nine, Hugo heard a gentle tap at his door, and Sub-Lieutenant Archer entered, making salutation with formal and old-fashioned politeness ; only accepting a seat when requested to do so, and with still more apologetic air producing a long-necked bottle and a couple of beakers from his capacious pocket.

After so much surgical treatment and thin diet, Hugo felt no objection whatever to this arrangement ; and, in short, the end of the bottle found him and his gaoler in familiar and almost confidential conversation. That worthy functionary emptied the last of his bottle with an air of hospitable triumph into Hugo's beaker, whilst with his disengaged hand he produced another flask of the same generous liquid from his other pocket.

" Well-a-day !" he exclaimed, as he drew the cork, " this canary is rich and ripe, but somehow it seemed to have lost half its virtue since the King left London. Now, without compliment to your worship, it is a real pleasure,

Heaven forgive me! to talk over the good old times once more, when we all lay together in the gall of iniquity and the bonds of sin. Now tell me, I pray thee, how fares His Majest—the man Charles, I mean? if he be more sorrowful than of yore, I doubt me, he must be well-nigh heart-broke.—He bears himself bravely, say you? It is well. He hath much to bear, so likewise hath his kingdom and the congregation of saints. Well, he was a comely man, and had a royal air; and though thou art a malignant, I can drink thy health—here's to you."

The old soldier's heart warmed as he went on, and he exclaimed, "Yea, by Saint George, so long as they be true men, I can respect a Roundhead, and love a Cavalier; but when such men as this false, two-sided Sir Janus come under my guardianship, I have but little toleration for them. But my time is up, and I must e'en take my leave of you, pledging you, for old times and good fellowship sake, one health before I go, in this last choppin."

"Then here's to the King," exclaimed Hugo,

rising from his chair, and raising his cup as high as his wounded arm would let him.

“ Well,” said the Sub-Lieutenant, with a curious smile, “ here’s to your friend. And now, for the sake of old times, tell me if there be any service which I can render thee in return for the pleasure of having spent half an hour in the company of an honest gentleman who can speak through his mouth, and not his nose.”

“ One thing only I would ask,” replied the prisoner, “ can you give me speech with this Sir Janus, who was a neighbour of mine in the old times you talk of?”

“ Aha !” cried the Lieutenant, “ I see—I see. Now I doubt whether this crafty old gentleman would like to hold any communication with such a Cavalier—yea, with such a downright malignant ; but he hath a daughter, fair as all the cedars of Libanus : of her I can give thee speech in the long gallery, as she passes to the chapel in the morning ; and perhaps, if you are of my taste, she may serve thy purpose as well as her smooth-tongued sire ?”

Hugo was fain to avail himself of this offer, without deeming it necessary to explain himself more fully to his new acquaintance.

The next morning the latter knocked at his door as ceremoniously as before, and conducted him to the place of meeting with the air and politeness of one who receives, instead of conferring a favour.

“Some little risk I do run,” said he, in reply to Hugo’s question, “but at the worst they can only discharge me from my post; and in the bloody times that are coming, an old soldier’s hand would be better employed abroad in the field than jingling keys within these four ill-boding walls. Now take thy place in this niche, and I will e’en intrust thee with a halberd and a steel-cap, so thou mayest pass for a sentinel, if wrong eyes should spy thee. The place is dark enough to conceal thy manner, which puts me more in mind of old times than the present.”

So saying, the Sub-Lieutenant placed a halberd in Hugo’s hands, and put a steel-cap on his head, carefully concealing his long locks.

under it. Then he showed him the length of his beat, and Hugo stalked away there, as if he were on parade.

It was still early, and the mists of the river dimmed the light and penetrated even within those mournful walls. Deep silence prevailed, and lasted so long, that the sound of a light footstep at length made Hugo start. A shadowy figure gradually resolved itself into woman's most perfect form, and Zillah approached. Hugo pronounced her name, and she stopped, trembled violently, and leant against a pillar for support.

"Reginald!" she exclaimed, "is it possible thou art escaped from death and danger, to meet me here and shake my resolution?"

"Not Reginald, dear Zillah," whispered Hugo, "but his unworthy brother, who, finding himself a fellow-prisoner with your father, sought to see him, and was kindly permitted to wait you here."

As Hugo spoke, Zillah gradually recovered herself, and greeted him kindly. Her manner was constrained, however; she was very pale,

and her eyes seemed to rest on vacancy as she spoke. She confessed that probably Sir Janus would not like to receive a visit from a notorious Cavalier, but she would tell him of Hugo's kind intentions; and if Hugo could find himself in the same place the next morning, she would inform him of all that passed. Before then, too, she would have seen Phœbe, she hoped, and learned more of the future fate that awaited them all.

So saying, she opened an adjoining door, and then raising a curtain, passed under it into her father's apartment.

Hugo had nothing more to do but to resume his mock watch, and he was soon roused from his reveries by the approach of two persons in deep conversation. Not wishing to overhear their words, he saluted noisily with his halberd, as he had seen the Roundheads do, and the strangers became silent. Both seemed too intent on their own thoughts, however, to notice him, and they passed, with a slight bend of the head, on the part of the elder, in answer to his salute. He was a stern but anxious

looking man, slightly bent by infirmity, rather than by years, and from the key which he held in his hand, Hugo rightly supposed him to be the Lieutenant of the Tower himself. His companion was a tall dark man, whom Hugo remembered well.

They passed on, and to the warder's great discomfort they approached his door, the master key turned in the lock, but just then, the sub-lieutenant hastily presented himself, whispered some words into his ear, and without a moment's delay the Lieutenant resumed his key, uttered some apology to his dark companion and hurried away after his subordinate. Considerable noise and clamour, and clanging of arms was soon heard resounding through the long galleries below, but the dark visitor heeded it not. He folded his cloak, passed and re-passed, and paused before the door which Zillah had entered, and then moved away.

After a brief space, silence was restored below, and the sub-lieutenant reappeared ;—without haste, or the utterance of a single word, he

took away the halberd and steel cap, and consigned Hugo to his chamber. Almost immediately afterwards, a real sentinel's heavy tread was heard pacing along the gallery so lately guarded by a Cavalier.

CHAPTER II.

Ruffian ! let go that rude, uncivil touch !

SHAKESPERE.

THE second morning of Hugo's captivity passed slowly and without event, until about the hour of noon. Then his door was suddenly thrown open, and without any announcement Hezekiah Doom strode into the chamber ; darkening the grated little window's feeble light with his tall form, and for some minutes taking no notice of Hugo, who had risen instinctively to receive his visitor.

At length Hugo spoke :—" This unexpected opportunity is the first, Sir, I have had of ex-

pressing to you my gratitude for having saved my life."

"Enough, enough of that vanity," said the Puritan, in a stern but mournful voice; "thou knowest not how little I risked, or how gratefully I would then have yielded up my doomed life to Him who gave it. It was not *thou* whom I sought beneath the waters—but a sign as to whether my earthly task were done. It was *not* done; and I was flung back upon existence, like the Prophet Jonah, in order to fulfil my appointed time. Nevertheless, I repent not that thou wert saved, since life to thee is no penance; at least not now, while dreams of glory fill thy brain, and a happy love expands thy heart. Thou art gentle too, and I have marked thee in the battle forbear others when they forbore not thee, and thy sword was more ready to shield than to destroy."

"You have fought against us then?" asked Hugo, touched in spite of himself by the tone rather than the words in which the Puritan had spoken.

"Yea, I have assisted in the good cause, but

only as the wind impels the ships of war. My voice filled the hearts of those who fought; but mine own hand never shall wield weapon more. Once, and once too often, it hath drawn the life-blood of a fellow-sinner; and thus attainted, it may never draw the sword of Gideon."

"Surely," rejoined Hugo, uncertain whither this strange discourse was tending, "surely it was not forbidden to Gideon to contend against his enemies, and *he* shed blood."

"Yea," said the Puritan, "but the warrior's trade may degenerate into butchery, or become sublimed into sacrifice. But I came not hither to talk of such things. Hear me—thou wouldst be free? But thy heart desireth speech with her thou lovest more than liberty itself. I will lead thee to her; she is in danger from evil men, and still more evil women: thou shalt rescue her, and restore her unto safety. What, then, wilt thou do for me in return?"

Hugo started to his feet, and replied with unbounded and impatient offers of life—fortune—everything.

"But one thing I require of thee," said

Hezekiah, slowly and distinctly ; “ and to that thou shalt swear by the holiest thing that thy shallow papistical faith retains : if I do all that I have promised, thou shalt swear to fulfil my first commands, be they what they may.”

“ And if you speak truly,” exclaimed Hugo, “ I will swear to what you will, provided it be nothing contrary to my loyalty, my good faith, or my religion.”

“ *Thy* religion !” retorted the Puritan, half sadly, half scornfully. “ Well, be it so. Now swear.” And Hugo swore.

Hezekiah then returned to the door, at which he knocked three times. It opened, and a diminutive man stepped into the room and deposited a black parcel on the ground : the Puritan then took a seat, bowed his head upon the table, and seemed lost in thought or prayer.

Meanwhile the dwarf, in a subdued and frightened voice, exhorted Hugo to be quick and array himself in the garments he had brought : they were adapted for the most pharisaical Roundhead, but Hugo did not hesitate to clothe his gallant form in their dreary disguise. The

dwarf assisted him actively, and gazed upon his performance as a valet with conceited satisfaction, until he cast his eyes upon the long bright hair that floated down over the Puritanical vestments.

“ By the tongue of Rabshekah and the life of Absalom !” exclaimed the dwarf, “ you must forego that vanity, that becometh rather the tire of a harlot than the head of the righteous.”

So saying, he produced an enormous pair of scissors, leaped up upon a chair, and in a moment seized a handful of the obnoxious ornament in his left hand. Poor Hugo ! he would have borne much rather than retard his important mission for a moment ; but still to be shorn, and as if in mockery, was very trying. While he hesitated, Hezekiah looked up, and his face changed into a scowl so terrific, that the dwarf shrank down as if blasted.

“ Finish what thou hast begun, fool, without impertinence,” muttered his master, “ and let me find thee in half an hour where thou knowest.”

The dwarf once more mounted the chair,

carefully but quickly folded up the obnoxious hair, and fixed over it a high steeple-crowned hat so firmly as to defy all danger of inspection. Then he girded a long straight rapier on Hugo's thigh, hastily swept all his Cavalier garments into a bag, and disappeared as if afraid of being recalled into a presence that he feared.

The Puritan then motioned to Hugo to follow him. They passed out into the well-known gallery, and as they came opposite to one of the bright old shields, Hugo started to behold the transformation that had been wrought in his appearance. He looked, even in his own eyes, like one of the Zerubbabels or the Habakkuks who then abounded in the Roundhead army. It is true that his gait was rather too bold and free for the habit that he wore, but then his dark companion, for whom all made way, disdained to alter *his* step to any conventional usage. When they reached the Tower gate, they found horses waiting for them, and so they rode hastily away towards Charing Cross.

Hitherto they had preserved a profound silence; but when they had dismounted, and entered on

foot into the Spring Gardens, Hezekiah thus informed Hugo of the part that it behoved him to act:—

“ Ask no questions until thou mayest do so from the maiden’s own lips. Thou wilt find her in much fear: draw near unto her and whisper thy name; tell her, if need be, to claim thy protection as her near kinsman. Speak no other word, but let thine ears and eyes be open to my signs.”

So saying, Hezekiah drew near a handsome house, near which he paused, until he heard a door opened into Charing Street, and footsteps retiring; he then knocked, and was deferentially admitted with his companion by a very prim-looking waiting-woman. They passed into a richly-adorned room, with an inlaid floor, over which was laid a carpet so soft that they moved noiselessly into the room beyond. There every luxury seemed collected; the richest furniture, the brightest flowers, the most fragrant perfumes, the rarest pictures; every sense was cultivated almost to sensuality. Hugo’s anxious eyes took in all this, for it is wonderful of what exquisite and rapid percep-

tion the faculties are capable when thoroughly roused.

In this luxurious apartment there was a deep recess looking out upon the gardens, and to this Hezekiah pointed cautiously. Hugo approached, and there he found Phœbe, with dilated eyes and heightened colour that betokened some violent emotion. As soon as she caught sight of her disguised Cavalier, she started to her feet, and endeavoured to repel him with a lofty and indignant glance; but while her brow was bent and her nostril dilated, her poor heart beat visibly through all its covering.

Hugo uttered but one word—her own name; but that one word, together with the look that accompanied it, told her everything. She sank into her seat, and burst into a flood of grateful tears.

Just then a door at the far end of the apartment opened, and a lady of great but somewhat faded beauty entered. She saw Phœbe in a passion of tears; Hugo in puritanical dress and attitude, standing stiffly near her; and Hezekiah leaning against the wall, with folded arms and abstracted air.

“How now!” exclaimed the Countess of Carlisle (for she it was), “my gentle kinswoman in tears; a stranger in the room; and thou, reverend sir, an unconcerned spectator of this rude intrusion?”

Phoebe raised her head to rest her tearful eyes, not on the Countess, but on Hugo: observing his constrained and distant attitude, she bowed her head once more.

Meanwhile Hezekiah turned slowly towards the Countess, and replied; “Did not I say I would assist thee? I heard the voice of thy complaint, that this poor maiden had no friend in whom thou or she could confide. Excellent lady that thou art! thou wouldst otherwise fain have removed her from the power of the mighty Man! He is there; he is even at hand in thy private chamber. Let him now come forward if he list to press his suit; *thy* conscience will be clear, for the maiden has found a protector.”

This speech of Hezekiah’s was delivered in a tone of command, blended with sarcasm. It seemed to tell at once upon the Countess and Phoebe: the former coloured high over her

rouge; and the latter, when she heard of the mighty Man, rose to her feet, and folding her hands across her beating bosom, stood in a proud and firm attitude, that contrasted singularly with the soft and feminine character of her beauty.

The Countess looked irresolutely towards the door by which she had entered. After a few moments' pause, it opened, and gave admission to a good-looking man, somewhat past the middle age; he entered briskly, but paused cautiously, and cast a glance of inquiry at the Countess, when he perceived how the room was occupied.

Lady Carlisle assumed a dignified air, and requested coldly "to be informed whether Mr. Pym had appointed any friends to meet him at her house, as otherwise she could not account for the intrusion of those whom she now found in her private apartments." The person she addressed had too much craftiness to appear at a loss for counsel: with an audacity which has often served him at more dangerous need, he walked up straight to Phœbe, nodding familiarly to Hezekiah as he passed him by, and taking no

more notice of Hugo than if he were not in existence. He accosted Phœbe with a cheerful, kindly air, and congratulated her on her acquittance of all share in the late nefarious plot; insinuating at the same time that it was providential he happened to have influence with her judges.

“ Yes, my fair mistress,” he continued, “ it was well to have justice on your side; but sentence, like everything that proceedeth out of the heart of man, is oftentimes uncertain, and requires a favouring and fearless hand to guide it.”

The great democrat ceased to speak, and from very habit he watched the effect of his words as a skilful archer that of his arrow. The prestige of his great success; the marvellous power that he exercised over the mind of the many, by making it his own, by anticipating and satisfying its demands; all this had invested his words for years past with a power before which the spirit of man’s rivalry was bowed down.

Not so the mind of woman, however, always weaker or mightier than that of her nominal master, and her real slave. Phœbe saw in John

Pym, not the great Tribune of the People, and Dictator of the State ; she saw in him only an unacceptable lover ; a rather elderly, florid, sensual-looking suitor, whose attentions were by no means agreeable to her. His very assumption of power roused her pride ; his statement of it, her vanity ; she felt all the satisfaction of a martyr in defying him, and all the triumph of a mere beauty in refusing him. Besides, her true lover was standing by ; and what woman would not rejoice in the rare opportunity of proving her proud fidelity, not only to her own heart, but to that of him she loved ?

The result of all this was as brief as the theory of it is prolonged. When Pym attempted to take her hand, she withdrew it as if from a taint, and her eyes flashed through the tears that now fell no longer, but hung suspended in their brilliant fountains.

“ Justice ! ” she repeated ; “ and dare you to profane that word to ears that you have so insulted ? And do you boast that your power averted a sentence that *could* not have been so intolerable as your mediation in my favour ? Answer me one question ? do you aspire to be

the ruler of this land, and have you left therein enough of its ancient virtue to let me feel that I, an Englishwoman, am free? If so, let me depart from this polluted house, and seek freedom and purity anywhere, so as it be not among patriots or Puritans!"

That defenceless girl looked very grand, and almost Pythonic, while she spoke; but poor Phœbe's heroics were no match for the cold sarcastic, subtle person she addressed. Menaces, punishment, the scaffold itself, cannot extinguish enthusiasm, but may oftentimes fan its flame. Ridicule or apathy are far more fatal to its energies.

Pym only smiled indulgently as Phœbe spoke, and though his eyes looked warm admiration, his voice was free from all emotion as he replied, "Very comely art thou thus — thy words are pretty, but their spirit altogether uncommendable. Now, thou knowest, thou art free as the wind that wanders where it listeth; but it is not seemly that a maiden so fair and young should wander through our crowded streets like a roe among the mountains. We will take that thou art well cared for, my pretty one. But

meanwhile I have matter of importance for your private ear regarding him you wot of."

So saying, Phoebe's dangerous admirer made a movement to lead her away; but she shrank from him with alarm, and after a rapid glance at Hezekiah's assuring countenance, she exclaimed,

"For my father I fear not; I am assured that he is safe, even from *your* machinations; and were he not, Heaven forbid that I should prefer his safety to his honour and mine own."

Pym was now growing warm, whether from anger or its reverse; and he exclaimed hastily

"Enough, enough of this; whatever your motives may be for acting tragedy before these godly men, you know that you are among your best friends here. I tell you, you will for ever repent not making your father's peace; it may be even now too late; come then, I pray thee, for thine own sake."

So saying, and long accustomed to exercise his own will, he seized Phoebe's shrinking hand, and at the same moment felt a grasp of iron on his own shoulder. Hezekiah had hitherto

remained apparently lost in thought, and unobserved of all that passed; but his eye had watched Hugo's anger rising, and anticipated his first moment instantaneously.

The Puritan of politics turned short round, and confronted the Puritan of religion; a world of warring thoughts seemed roused in each, but the angry eyes of the former soon quailed beneath the solemn and earnest gaze of the minister; it was solemn, earnest, and reproachful. Hezekiah was the first to speak:

"He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool," said he. "Wouldst thou sacrifice thy high place as a chief elder in Israel for this Susannah? I tell thee thou art in no condition to act in this matter. The maiden hath well spoken, and she is free; and lo! at hand is one hath a right and the power to protect her; let her go forth, and if she come to evil, the evil be on her own head and upon his. Go, young man," he continued, rapidly, "lead forth the maiden, and fear not; conduct her whithersoever she would go, but return not, nor look back."

Before his speech was half finished, Phoebe

had moved towards the door. Hugo only lingered for the last word of the address, in hope that it might guide him, but at an impatient glance from Hezekiah, he departed, drawing the door after him. As he descended the stairs hastily, he could hear the Puritan minister's voice stern and high, but the only word that he could catch was something about the prophet Nathan.

The young lovers passed hastily out of the house, traversed the Spring Gardens, and then, for the first time, by the notice she attracted, Phœbe remembered that she wore no hood or wimple. Hugo looked anxiously round him through the darkening mist of evening, and was pausing uncertain what to do, when he heard a cracked voice singing the well-known song :

“ Plague take Pym and all his peers,
Hurrah for Prince Rupert and his Cavaliers.”

He moved eagerly in that direction, and found Hezekiah's dwarf standing in the shadow of one of the old houses that formed the ancient village of Charing. With him was Phœbe's

waiting-woman, who threw herself on the neck of her young mistress in the first joy of meeting her. The little dwarf, however, gave no time for explanations ; he impatiently caught Hugo by the corner of his Puritan cloak, and dragged him forward. The women followed, and in a few minutes the little party arrived at Whitehall Stairs, where a boat and two watermen seemed waiting for them. The dwarf impatiently signed to his companions to take their places in the boat, and they were soon swiftly rowing down the river.

All preserved a profound silence, except Hugo and Phœbe, who, wrapped in the same cloak, conversed eagerly until they reached the Tower. When there, they shot in under a dark archway, and were soon admitted through an iron grating into a subterranean passage ; there they were received by an official of the Tower ; he read by the light of his lantern a paper handed to him by the dwarf, and then motioned to our adventurers to disembark.

They followed their guide and gaoler up dark staircases, and at length found themselves in

the gallery where Hugo had kept his watch. After waiting for some time, their guide was relieved by the friendly sub-lieutenant, who led Phœbe to the well-known door by which Zillah had entered the previous day. The sub-lieutenant seemed pleased at the poor girl's reluctance to leave Hugo, and whispered that it was only for a time. Then she entered, together with her woman, and the door closed upon them. Hugo was conducted to his own chamber; his friendly gaoler only saying to him significantly, "By and bye."

The events of the last few hours had passed so rapidly, that Hugo was glad to be left in solitude, in order, by thinking over them, to divest them of their dream-like character and indistinctness. His first care, however, was to divest himself of his unpalatable disguise, and he then sat down to muse over poor Phœbe's hurried narrative, which was as follows:

She had been brought to London with considerable form and respect, and taken straightway to Lady Carlisle's house, where she had pined grievously. That lady had received her

with eager civility, as directed by her Round-head allies. The evening of her arrival, Pym came to see her, professing friendly intentions to put her on her guard against her examination before the Secret Committee on the morrow. He appeared more interested, however, in her than in the plot, and at length Phoebe turned round to seek for Lady Carlisle's protection. That lady had left the room, and a sudden sense of fear seized upon the poor, defenceless girl. She turned to the window casement, thrown open to the warm evening breeze, and as she grasped the strong branches of a vine upon the outer wall, she felt secure. A fall of forty feet, and rough stones below, would afford her a safe refuge. Her visitor saw, and in a moment comprehended her resolution. He seemed to change like magic; he was no longer the daring admirer, but an anxious, fatherly sort of friend, soothing, persuading, and even exhorting to virtue and single faith. But Phoebe scarcely heard him; her eyes were strained to perceive some passer-by, as she shrieked for some assistance. Suddenly a deep

and stern voice was heard in altercation and reproach in the ante-room, and Hezekiah entered, accompanied by Lady Carlisle. Pym rose at his entrance, and taking a friendly leave of Phoebe, left the room.

The Divine approached her with a considerate and almost deferential air, and sarcastically apologized for Lady Carlisle's absence from her charge. He added that this worthy lady confessed her house to be no fit resting-place for an inexperienced maiden, seeing that it was open at all hours to all the leading statesmen for the good of the cause. But her Ladyship had professed her inability to part with her young kinswoman, unless to worthy and responsible hands.

"This thou shalt find betimes to-morrow," he continued; "meantime it is necessary that thou should'st abide here until thou art cleared of that which they bring against thee. But rest in peace, for this worthy lady will see that thou receivest no wrong. Two tried and godly men have charge of thee, moreover, as their prisoner; and if thy voice be heard again in complaint, woe unto this house!"

The proud Countess listened to this address patiently and in silence, endeavouring afterwards, at the same time, to reassure her young kinswoman, and to conciliate her angry friend. Soon afterwards, Phœbe was left to such repose as she could find.

The next morning betimes, Lady Carlisle entered her room, and informed her that certain members of the Secret Committee would have speech with her. There were three of them, accompanied by a clerk. One of the three was addressed by the other as Henry Martin. He was a joyous-looking, florid, most unpuritanical-looking person. His first few questions were keen and searching, and business-like. When they had been answered with all the simplicity of innocence, he seemed suddenly to treat the whole affair as a jest ; at the same time appearing desirous of prolonging the examination for mere amusement. One of his companions, however, rebuked him for wasting precious time, and hastened him away. He then once more assumed a formal air and tone, and declared the examinant quite free from

suspicion, and therefore from all custody. Scarcely had the members departed, when Hugo and Hezekiah entered the house, and so terminated Phœbe's tale.

CHAPTER III.

By that sword I swear,
Which gently laid my knighthood on my shoulder,
I'll answer thee in any fair degree,
Or chivalrous design of knightly trial.
And when I mount, alive may I not light
If I be traitor.

SHAKESPERE.

ALL was silent in the Tower until the hour of gate-closing, soon after which the friendly sub-lieutenant's knock was heard; the key grated harshly in the door, and he entered. This time the old soldier had brought not only wine, but pipes. He was less formal than before, but something seemed to weigh upon his mind, of which he could not divest himself for some time. Hugo was busied with his own reflections; and in his happy dreams, did not care to anticipate the evil tidings that he felt were coming. The first bottle, therefore,

discharged its duty in silence. As the sub-lieutenant drew the cork of the second, however, he uttered a deep sigh, and though he held up his glass to the light, he looked not at it, but sideways at his young companion's face.

At length he spoke thus: "This is old wine; I bought it long ago from my predecessor in this office, and I have used it slowly, for I never drink it except with some good comrade, who reminds me of old times. Such come but seldom, and sooth to say, they stay not long."

"A good omen for me, I hope," said Hugo, cheerfully; "for though the wine be good, and its purveyor better, I confess I would more enjoy a bottle of it in other lodgings."

The kind-hearted gaoler fixed a melancholy gaze on his hopeful young companion, who feared that he had given pain, and added: "I feel assured that you, my good friend, would rejoice—almost as much as I should—to see me depart."

"That's it, that's it," said the old soldier, hurriedly, "but I did not know how to say it. Yea! (yes I mean) right glad would I be to

see thee depart ; but—but—there be more means of departure hence than one.”

The speaker’s voice became solemn as he uttered these words, and as he ended he cast his eyes on the ground, wishing to spare Hugo the pain of being observed, as he heard this ominous notice. His delicacy was unnecessary, however. Young as he was, my brother had long prepared himself to die ; he had looked at death’s hideous disguises until he had seen through them, and discovered the true comfort and repose that lay beneath. Nevertheless, it was a solemn sentence for him to hear, and a radiant vision of young Phœbe in her beauty flashed across his imagination. But this he sternly put by, and addressed his gaoler in a scarcely altered voice :—

“ I understand you, kind, good man ; and now, you see, you need not fear to tell me more. When is it to be, and how do they dare to execute a prisoner taken in open battle ? ”

“ Nay, nay,” said the Lieutenant, apparently much relieved, and reassured by Hugo’s firmness ; “ I said not when, or of any surety ; but thy stoutness entitles thee to know all. You

see the Cavalier who occupied this room before you went out to the scaffold, and at short notice, for they called him a spy ; so did the man before him, though he went through a trial first ; and that before him was one who left not his match in England for wisdom of words, and bravery of heart—it was the great and dangerous Earl of Strafford. Now you have been absent from here all day, I know not where ; but since your return, there have been hasty messengers from Westminster, each countermanding the other's orders ; what they were, I know not ; for his honour the Lieutenant remembers old times too well, when I served in the Royal army, to trust me with anything but his orders ; and he knows that if the man Charles (His Majesty I mean) himself were here, I'd not betray a trust. Well, as I was saying, I know not what the messengers' orders were ; but *mine* are to have this chamber altered by workmen to-morrow, and I know that it will be *empty*. I wish to push myself into no man's secrecy, but if you were to tell me whether you went through any trial to-day, I would bid you prepare for the worst : otherwise I understand not this business,

for the Secret Committee are not wont to use the scaffold without some sort of trial first held."

Hugo would fain have replied to the anxious soldier's confidence, but he felt himself bound to secrecy: he told him so much, however, as consisted with honour, and concluded by asking him if he knew anything of Hezekiah's private history.

The Sub-Lieutenant looked cautiously round the apartment, and then drew near the door to listen. Having thus assured himself, he answered in a low voice, "Well, I wot I knew him—too much and too little. He is the only man on earth that ever made me fear—I know not what. Ay, 'fore George, I am not alone in that. The Secret Committee that blusters bravely against kings and nobles is quiet enough before this mysterious man; and well they may, for, with the assistance of the Book of Isaiah, his wild and powerful talk would raise half London upon them in an hour's discourse. He comes and goes where he lists, but specially where shot and steel are most at work; and they tell me, that when he preaches from a drum-head to the saints, they fight like so many

devils, and ever carry all before them. Well, sir, he'll walk into the Lord General's own quarters after the battle, perhaps, and make him write the "true relation," as they call it, of the fight; and then he'll go out upon the field, and preach all night to the dying soldiers. Before next sunset, he will be with the Secret Committee, or passing all our sentinels like a ghost, and closeted with the Lieutenant of this Tower. But, most of all, he seems to have bewitched your old prisoner, with the heathen name. Sir Janus, they say, gave him shelter in old times, when he was persecuted; and he can now do anything with his old protector, except make him an out and out Commonwealth man, like himself."

The Sub-Lieutenant paused, and seemed to be contemplating in silence the character he described. At length he resumed, in reply to a question from Hugo.

"Why, where he comes from no one seems to know; but," he added in a low and fearful tone, "some say he comes from the dead, and some that he has sold his right hand to Satan, for no one ever saw him remove it (if he has

one) from his cassock ! Sure I am that sometimes he looks as if he ought to be in his coffin, and sometimes he seems as if he had the life and strength of a dozen men in him."

" Well," said Hugo, " be he man or fiend, he once saved my life, and he has proved my friend this day ; I scarcely think, therefore, that he would lend himself to my destruction."

" Be not too sure," said the old soldier, shaking his head and looking very grim. " He doesn't move after the laws or customs of this world. I verily believe that if he thought it would advance the cause one dagger's length, he would fling his mother from the top of the White Tower as pleasantly as I would crush this empty glass. Oh, if thou hadst heard him preach, as I have done, on the goodly text, ' Cut off thy right hand and cast it from thee,' it's little thou couldst say that a head or so would stand in his way ; no, not if it were that of anointed Majesty itself."

" Why, you would make him out little better than a papistical Jesuit," said Hugo, interested in spite of himself on his behalf.

" There be Jesuits, my young friend," re-

plied the Lieutenant, "in all creeds and in all professions; if by that word you mean men who scruple not as to means, so that the end be sufficiently justifiable in their eyes, or tempting in its execution. This Hezekiah, however —"

"Peace, babbler!" said the stern voice that the poor Lieutenant feared so much: the door was thrown open; Hezekiah strode into the room, and the Lieutenant of the Tower, who had accompanied him, remained outside, in a respectful attitude. Poor Archer started to his feet, and his look inquired fearfully whether he had been overheard. If he had, his unwelcome visitor did not condescend to notice it; he merely motioned him to retire; the door clanked violently behind him, and poor Hugo once more found himself alone with the Puritan divine.

Like a crowd of people passing through one narrow door, this person's thoughts struggled forth so eagerly, that they often produced a temporary stoppage of each other; but no outward sign of embarrassment appeared on his calm dark face, as with his eyes alone he seemed to inquire whether he might trust the

prisoned royalist. Hugo for some time imitated the silence of his visitor, whom he understood so little, that he feared to address him.

At length the Puritan spoke :—" Thou hast heard," he said, " what the vulgar speech is concerning me—poor simple worm that I am—what thinkest *thou* ?"

" I think of you," replied Hugo, " only as one who saved my life long ago, and who this day conferred a yet greater favour on me. But, before I say more, let me entreat you to use your great influence that this worthy Sub-Lieutenant do not suffer through his kindness to me : he is still faithful to your service."

" It is known that he is so," said Hezekiah, drily ; " nevertheless he is discharged from his present office, to command a company of volunteers in the field ; but he hath a hundred pieces given him for refusing to surrender his trust to those traitors of the plot. Now for thine own case : he hath well said that thy place will be empty on the morrow, for thou wilt be free. The Lord General, who too much loveth to make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, hath been won over by high-sounding

words of heathen chivalry, to give up to the malignants two of their officers, because two of the godly have escaped, notwithstanding some foolish parole. Thou art one of the freed."

Hugo knew not how much the thought of approaching death had chilled his blood, until he found it rushing warmly through his veins once more; and with it came thoughts of Phœbe. The Puritan watched his countenance with keen but calm scrutiny, and soon added,

"To-morrow thou must depart, and before day, to join the unhappy, godless camp of Charles Stuart. Surely thou hast seen its iniquities, and the swift ruin that impends over the oppressor. Turn thee, then, whilst it be yet time, and join the standard of the Lord. Young, and brave, and true as thou art, thou mayest thyself be the Chosen One—that Gideon—whom alone our mighty men are waiting for. A roused people, with souls lately enslaved, and bodies all in pawn to a tyrant for liberty to live, await thee.—There is, with us, no mammon-wealth, no courtly honour to reward thy noble sacrifice, or damnify it with one selfish stain. Toil, danger, ignominy, perhaps death, await thee;

and instead—only a people's gratitude, and perhaps a martyr's crown. There is a witness in thy soul for the truth of the great cause : half stifled by doubt, and disguised by prejudices, thy nobler instinct still tells thee it is true. *Thy* cause, what is it? The pleasure of a fantastically crowned man, and the fantastic will and the formal creed of his servile and prelatric favourites. *Our* cause is that for which martyrs and heroes in all times have proudly died—the salvation, temporal and eternal, of the people.”

Thus far the Puritan had spoken, with the restrained voice and manner of the practised orator ; but he then warmed with his own words, caught fire from the velocity of his own thoughts, and burst forth into one of those extraordinary harangues by which he had so often moved the people, and even senators, to his will. Unlike many of his fellow-preachers, his enthusiasm was sincere, and of lofty pitch ; while to all the fearfulness of Hugh Peters, and the vehemence of Vicars, he united the skill of the practised rhetorician, and the graces of the scholar. Many of the Puritans, when carried

away by their subject, forgot or abandoned the scriptural phraseology of their common conversation ; but this man was so thoroughly imbued with the style and thoughts of the sacred writers, that his language became more biblical in proportion as it was unstudied : he would have been as easily understood by the warriors who followed Joshua or Gideon, as by the citizens whom he invested with all the attributes of Israel ; he might sometimes have been supposed addressing the men of ancient Jerusalem, instead of those of the modern Jewry.

Hugo listened in silent wonder and admiration to the words of the Puritan, as they rolled forth in all the power and pomp of impassioned oratory. His own imaginative and ardent spirit caught up the inspiration of the preacher, and he could himself have continued in the same strain when the sonorous voice to which he listened had become silent. Nevertheless, he only felt as a spectator of a play : he could not understand that a proposition to turn traitor had been actually made to him : it seemed impossible. So he did not even feel offended.

After a few minutes' pause, to let the transition become less abrupt, he replied that he was grateful for the good opinion, and the interest that the preacher expressed concerning him, and that he regretted he was unable to answer arguments so eloquently and powerfully urged.

"At least," he added, "I am unable to answer them here, and with my weak voice; but in the field, and with my heart's best blood, my answer shall be always ready. The very art and strength of your learned controversy, proves with how much difficulty you arrived at your conclusion to rebel: my loyalty is a simple faith, in which—come weal, come woe—I live and die."

The Puritan gazed on the young Cavalier with a mixture of scorn, pity, and admiration: "Thou art possessed by some evil spirit," he exclaimed, "that, like the lying prophet unto Ahab, hath power to assume the garb of truth to lead thee to destruction. Yet, verily, my heart yearns toward thee, and I would snatch thee as a brand from the burning. I tell thee, even now, I see the end of thy brief career, ere this evil warfare is accomplished—

not in the open field, with banners waving, and shouts resounding to cheer thy dying heart; but hemmed in by scorching walls and pitiless flames, vainly fighting for another moment of gasping life—even thus hopeless and helpless shalt thou perish for thine evil cause!”

“So be it!” was Hugo’s sole reply; he spoke solemnly, for the preacher’s voice and manner gave his menace the air of a prophecy, but he spoke firmly as one who was left, or would accept, no choice.

The preacher spoke long and thoughtfully: some traces of emotion were just visible, and then repressed upon his sternly expressive countenance. At length he spoke:

“We part, then, for the last time. I have wished thee well, and would fain save thee from the coming doom. Thou hast chosen otherwise. But thou shalt behold her whom thou lovest, for thy love is the best part of thine unregenerate nature. Thou shalt see her sister, too, whom I may not see, and thus you shall say unto her: ‘At midnight, and not at morn, shall ye depart; even as Paul was sent down to Cæsarea, when the Chief Captain feared for

his people.' And now for thine own part, if thou returnest unto the home of thy fathers, tarry not there; but haste thee straightway to thy people, and escape the coming judgment."

Having thus spoken, the preacher strode to the door, knocked three times, and was answered by the grunting voice of the dwarf, who turned the key and flung open the door. Hugo followed at a sign, and almost immediately afterwards found himself ushered into the room by which he had stood sentry; the dwarf entering with him, and crouching at the door as soon as he had closed it.

CHAPTER IV.

Hope ! thou sad lovers only friend !
Thou way that may'st dispute it with the end !
For love, I fear's a fruit that does delight
The taste itself less than the smell and sight.

COWLEY.

THE prison apartment in which Hugo now found himself, was considerably larger than his own ; and it was so dimly lighted by a single cresset lamp that objects in the centre alone were visible. There sat the old Baronet, shading with a trembling hand the eyes that strove to penetrate the darkness, and ascertain who stood before him. Hugo paused awhile, unwilling to intrude himself abruptly, even on his friends ; but the dwarf precipitated his movement by growling out angrily :

“How now, Sir Cavallero, hast thou got

nought to say or do, after perilling the preacher's credit and my skin in bringing thee hither? The man they call Lieutenant of the Tower will soon arrive, and if thou art not found in thine own cell, we shall have pretty roysterings."

Hugo immediately advanced, but was met by Phœbe, who laid her hand upon his arm, and drew into one of the shaded recesses of the chamber.

Sir Janus followed them with his eyes, and exclaimed, as if to bystanders: "I call every one to witness, that this Cavalier is here with no privity of mine. If his presence here be not some snare to entrap an innocent old man, I conjure ye to have him removed."

The dwarf appeared to enjoy the prisoner's uneasiness immensely; he wriggled himself over to the Baronet's chair, and made him start as he felt his ancles clasped in the dwarfish, but fat fingers of his visitor.

"Start not!" exclaimed the little man, "I was but taking thy measure for leg-irons—those of poor Tomkins will suit thee well, and he

will want them no more, as he was hanged yesterday. Now be still, wilt thou? else will I give the alarm, and let the garrison know of thy Cavaliero conspirator."

The prisoner started to his feet terror-stricken, but he was too nervous to speak. He moved towards Hugo in order probably to expel him by main force, when a noble form rose before him and interposed: then in a mournful but sweet tone came Zillah's words:

"Father, my father! what wouldst thou do? Bethink thee that this apartment is thy home, and must show thy hospitality, especially to one of the few old friends that remain from happier times."

"True, true!" said the old man, pausing irresolutely, and then sinking back into his chair. Whatever might have been his other pretensions, his hospitality had been always genuine; as such, perhaps, he was the more proud of it. "True, as to that," he repeated after some thought, "but Heaven grant that *thou*, too, art not plotting against me in furtherance of some patriotic or godly scheme. And this creature,

too," he added, spurning the dwarf with his foot, "must I also submit to his intrusion and his insolence."

"Turn me out, turn me out!" screamed the dwarf, rubbing his hands and chuckling with delight. "Turn me out, I ask no better; and my pretty mistress here will fetch me back—aye, tall and beautiful as she is, with all her pride, she'll fetch me back."

And the dwarf leered hideously into Zillah's anxious eyes.

"Yea, father," she exclaimed, "let him too abide here for a little season; to-morrow and ever after, I trust, thou shalt chose thine own company, when we are free from the snares that now encompass us."

The dwarf leered still more hideously and sarcastically, and screamed keek, keek. Sir Janus looked up from the dwarf to his stately daughter, and a different thought seemed to take possession of him. Hitherto he had been entirely occupied with the cares of his own safety, but now a nobler feeling stirred within him; a father's sorrow spoke in his reproachful tones as he exclaimed:

“And have I been deceived by thee, too, my child! Hast thou, too, been leaguings with mine enemies against an innocent old man?—Else, what can such as thou have in common with this wretched creature?”

Once more the dwarf screamed “keek, keek, keek,” but in an angry mood. “Yes, yes, old furbelow, you *have* been deceived, and she has been deceived, and they who think themselves wiser than either have been deceived; and a whole nation is deceived, tall as they are—keek, keek, keek! and shall be taken in the crafty wiliness that they have imagined.”

So saying, the dwarf drew himself up to his full height, of some three feet, and hideously imitated the noble attitude of his master; then, bursting into a guttural laugh, he stood upon his head, and almost thrust the high heels of his shoes into the Baronet’s indignant face. A slow step was heard outside, and seemed to linger on the threshold; it produced a wondrous change upon the dwarf; in a moment he was crouching near the door, whimpering like a frightened hound.

Upon Zillah’s very different nature, too, that

slight sound seemed to produce a strong effect. At her father's words, the first she had ever heard in reproach, she had fallen on her knees by his side ; and winding one fair arm round his neck, seemed about to pour out her heart's feeling in all confidence on his awakened ear. But now she rose suddenly, her pale cheek becoming flushed, and her voice assuming that grave and solemn tone to which it had been latterly accustomed.

“ Father,” she exclaimed, “ bear with me a little longer and I will tell thee all. If I have erred in taking too much upon me, I have been punished by the humiliation and the misery of concealment. Bear with me until to-morrow, and believe that no earthly motive but thy safety can influence me now. Thou art ill, and must have rest before our long journey ; let me see thee to thy bed, and then upon my sister and me only can rest the responsibility of this Cavalier's visit. Remember he is the son of thine ancient, noble, friend, and the friend of thy children.”

The old man, thus soothed, resigned himself to his daughter's will, and suffered himself to

be led into the adjoining apartment. Hugo was left alone with Phoebe.

Reader ! whoever thou art, thou hast loved, and in loving, hast known the marvellous vicissitudes of hope, and fear, and rapture, and despair ; and how they may all be blended in one paroxysm of that mysterious passion, until bursting heart and aching brain threaten annihilation to our frail being. Then, at some magical touch of the loved form, the pent-up storm of feeling finds vent, pours itself forth in an exulting tide by a thousand invisible channels of sympathy, and at length ebbs back into a soft satisfied calm ; soothed, ennobled and enriched by the blessings it has received, and the force it has distributed in its sympathetic career. Thus, gradually as the long-prisoned and labouring feelings of two hearts flow into one another, their currents become blended, and they settle into calm—a calm in which heaven is reflected. The greater the hardship, the more imminent the peril, by which such happiness is purchased, the more intense and concentrated is its delight.

So Hugo felt : clasping Phoebe's hand in

his, he remained motionless and silent, without the power or the wish to give voice to the unutterable feelings that glowed in his eyes and thrilled in every fibre of his frame.

Thus the young lovers might have remained for hours, rapt and contented in that innocent trance of pleasure, but the Tower clock tolled loud and solemnly, and the dwarf seemed wakened by the sound. His unnatural cry of "keek, keek, keek," came loudly from his dark corner; he then set himself in motion and rolling himself over to where Hugo sat, he squatted on his heels and peered into the glistening eyes that were gazing on a far different object.

For a few minutes the dwarf remained quiet, surveying the spectacle before him with a sort of malicious curiosity. Then he screamed louder than before "keek, keek! one half-hour of the clock is gone; another, and *thou* art gone. Have done with this speechless foolery and talk, will ye; a murrain on thy silence! my head aches with this churchyard stillness and darkness."

Hugo raised his foot to spurn the imp

away, but he had wriggled himself off, and was again crouching by the door, through which the same slow footfall had again been heard. Hugo would soon have delivered himself to his happy reveries, but that Phœbe spoke :—women are always the first to display presence of mind—if they be innocent ; if not, they are more reckless.

“ Precious time,” said Phœbe, “ is indeed flying, and we shall soon regret having learnt so little while it lasted. Tell me, how came you here, and what hope have you of release ? we depart to-morrow for our home, and oh ! how welcome will now be that quiet from which, so lately, I yearned to escape !”

Hugo had little to tell, and that little was soon said. His questions were more numerous, and in reply to them he learned the following tale from Phœbe.

“ I need not tell you,” she proceeded, “ with what joy I found myself once more in my poor father’s and in my sister’s arms. And Zillah was so changed — so affectionate, and consoling, and even confiding. You know how cautious and distant she had of late years be-

come—because I would not turn Puritan with her and foolishly laughed at her patriotism and her Saints. She now pressed me to her heart and wept over me as if I were a little child whom she had lost. Again and again, she embraced me, and having prevailed on my poor father to lie down, (for he is now very weak, I fear,) she led me into her own little room and knelt down and prayed a prayer that touched me to the soul, and made me feel as if I were praying too, and that most humbly and contritely. Then she drew me towards her, and laid her head upon my bosom and asked me, in her low sweet, soothing voice, to tell her faithfully all that had happened to me since we parted. And so I did, even as if I was speaking to myself—and once or twice I could feel her start, as I mentioned Lord Digby and your brother, and my escape from Lady Carlisle's horrible house. But she listened in silence until my story was all told, and then she embraced me very tenderly. Oh! I never knew before how much I loved her, or how much I had needed such a sister.

“She asked me some questions about Kate

d'Aubigny and your brother Reginald, and then said that she, too, had much to tell, but that time was now pressing; for my father had procured his liberty, though many were opposed to it—partly she feared, because of his large possessions, which might have been confiscated for less dangerous charges than had been made against him. Even now, she said, she was in anxiety lest counter-orders should arrive before dawn to stay his departure.

“Now, how shall I tell you, dear Hugo, what next she said? You must look away and unclasp my hand, and I will try to think of you as when we were children long ago and I used to tell you everything.”

“Yes, yes!” exclaimed Hugo, “let us have that long-ago back again, when I used to call you my little wife, and no one smiled or looked the graver for it.”

“Well! suppose it is now that long-ago,” said Phoebe, “and that we are playing under the old linden tree, and that you call me by that fond and foolish name once more, and that my father overhears you and is very wroth, and swears (until he remembers that it is not

safe to swear) that if you call me by that name he will be branded as a Cavalier by the all-powerful saints, who will make a millennium for themselves at Castle Bifrons, and spoil him like an Egyptian, and turn him out to beggary—after a life-long watchfulness to secure his possessions for his children, and for those that come after.”

Phœbe said all this, with something of her old smile upon her lips, although a tear in her anxious eyes told Hugo how true was the allegory. What his reply was, may be imagined, but Phœbe, as soon as she recovered from its consequent discomposure, resumed, more thoughtfully than before.

“Dear Hugo, it cannot be; my father is old and his wishes are sacred to me; he is ill and that makes them the more solemn. I have not Zillah’s firmness or lofty character, but I, have a wayward little will of my own, which, when it is by chance in a right direction, is very difficult to shake. We part to-night, and we must meet no more until this cruel war is over, which needs be soon; hypocrites and fanatics can never ultimately triumph over our

righteous King ; and then we may meet, even as we have met, without reproach, if not with a happier hope. Go then ; rejoin the standard of our anointed King, and win fresh honour from his enemies. There—the clock strikes the hour of separation, I have but one word more. These are times that make heroines of mere girls, and with a proud and willing heart I can bid you go and fight valiantly, as you were ever wont to do in the van of battle. Triumphant or defeated—living or dying, I am still and for ever your fond and devoted—sister.”

A croak from the dwarf and a rattling of keys at the door interrupted this last farewell. Zillah had glided forward and received her sister in her arms ; she held out her hand to Hugo in farewell.

“Tell Reginald,” she said, “that I now know all, and how I wronged him in supposing him a spy : tell him, too, that my last words blessed him, as those only can bless who bid an eternal farewell.”

The door, for some time ajar, now opened wide and the Lieutenant of the Tower made hasty signs, which soon brought Hugo to his

side, and almost immediately afterwards he was alone in his own cell.

Then, for the first time, he recollected the message that he had been desired to give Zillah as to her departure at midnight, but it was now too late. All was profoundly still in the long gallery, and his own strong door defied all attempts to open it. The events of the last hours would have made him wakeful, even without this anxiety; and by the time the clock tolled twelve, he had wound up his thoughts to such painful excitement, that the faintest sound became audible to his ear. He could hear an armed but cautious tread in the gallery—he could trace it to the apartment he had lately left—he could even hear the cautious knock, oftentimes repeated, without an answer. Then came impatient whisperings, and after long delay, other footsteps (some so light, yet the most audible of all) were heard, and then silence settled down on the grim Tower once more. They were gone, and he was fain to be glad.

CHAPTER V.

A devil, a born devil, on whose nature nurture can never stick ; on whom any pains humanely taken, are all lost. And as with age his body uglier grows, so his mind cankers.—SHAKESPERE.

MORNING soon dawned, and Hugo was awakened from a feverish sleep by the sounds of loud altercation in the gallery. He momentarily expected his own release, but it came not. The hours rolled on, and a turnkey entered at the usual time with the prisoner's usual repast. At the same time, the dwarf strutted in with an air of importance, and motioned authoritatively to the turnkey to leave the room. That functionary complied, only resenting his expulsion with a contemptuous grimace.

“ Eat, good lad,” said the dwarf, conde-

scendingly to Hugo ; “ eat, in order that thou mayst have stomach for my tidings. I don’t care if I taste a cup of that Canary myself, for I am well nigh weary with all the public business that presses upon us just now. Ah, well I wot, my brother Geoffrey took the right side of the post, as old Jamie used to say at Newmarket. The malignants have little to do in comparison of us, into whose hands the spoils of the wealthy are confided.”

“ Drink, then,” said Hugo, “ and forget the cares of State ; and, when it suits your convenience, inform me what is to be my fate.”

Hugo spoke with kindness to the poor dwarf, because, hideous as he was, and even malicious, he was associated with most dear recollections. The little man looked pleased and flattered : he held the deep cup to his lips with a pertinacity that proved how keenly he enjoyed it, and his red eyes twinkled as he laid it down.

“ Ha, ha,” he exclaimed, “ the bursar of the Tower uses thee well. I warrant thou payest two, or it may be three, nobles above allowance for thy cup and trencher. Well, a poor prisoner

can do no better with his coin : the stomach is the only free organ he possesses."

" Except the tongue," observed Hugo, " and I would fain be informed by yours to what motive I am indebted for your visit."

But the dwarf was in no hurry to reply : he was supremely happy, seated in a high-backed chair, with one beaker of wine down his throat, and another sparkling before him. He had cocked one little leg over the other, and was admiring its proportions, when Hugo repeated his question as courteously as before. Never yet was courtesy wasted or misplaced. It is the due of heaven-born man to man—the benevolence of manner ; ennobling a benefit conferred, and removing all humiliation from a benefit received ; it is the soft tongue that breaks the bone, repels insult with dignity, and gives protection, without patronage :—to the orator in the forum, the warrior in the fight, the lover in the bower, the noble in the hall, the citizen in the street—it is equally the test of the superior man. Even the mis-shapen and mis-minded dwarf was not insensible of its

effects; the more so as he had been little accustomed to it in the course of his unhappy life.

“You ask me, good youth,” he said, complacently, “why I am come to see thee: why, partly because I like thee, and partly because I have some business with thee; but as my preceptor is away, I am in no hurry to finish it, and put an end, even for a time, to our acquaintance; so here’s a good health and better times to you:” thus saying, the principal part of the dwarfish face disappeared into the beaker.

Hugo waited patiently until it emerged again, and then demanded “whether the ‘preceptor’ was not commonly called Hezekiah Doom.”

“True, true,” replied the dwarf, “by the uninitiated he is so termed. We who know him better call him the preceptor.”

“And am I to call you his pupil, his attendant, or his assistant?” inquired Hugo with a smile. “Keek, keek,” chuckled the dwarf; and then recollecting himself, he added with dignity,

"I am his *confidant*, and can tell you anything relating to him for the last five years."

"Then where were you the year before last, when the preceptor was in Lincolnshire?" asked Hugo.

"Ah! those were fine times. I was in a show. I had leave from the preceptor for a space; and I then got more money in a week than I now do come by in a month."

The wine had now got full possession of the dwarf's brain, and he spoke so strangely, that Hugo began to despair of learning his message; he made one more attempt, and as he did so he rose from his chair and began to pace up and down the room in his impatience. Perhaps there was something in his slow and measured tread that recalled the preceptor unpleasantly to the dwarf, for the poor little man shrank instinctively as he approached.

"I will tell; I will tell," he screamed: "you are to set forth at nightfall, and will find a horse at the Barbican; and to save interruption, thou shalt have thy old Puritan disguise, as well as a pass from the Lord General."

“And the preceptor has ordered all this?” inquired Hugo.

“The secret committee have ordered it,” said the dwarf, “but the preceptor took care that these orders should have effect. Oh! he’s an awful man, that preceptor.”

“And yet he gave you leave to become a show,” said Hugo.

“Eh, no! he never gave me leave to do anything; I became a show for my own profit and delight; but when the act against play-carts and actors came out from London, the mob set upon my stage, and pulled it to pieces, and had well nigh stoned me, when I was rescued by the preceptor, and I have kept close to him ever since.”

“You have done well, doubtless,” said Hugo, “especially if you love him.”

“Love him!” shrieked the dwarf in his old manner; “I love not, but I fear him, body and soul. Oh! it must be grand to be feared as he is feared. I try to be as frightful as I can, but though I sometimes make people screech and shudder, I can’t terrify as he does. Ah! even now, as I whisper, I think he hears me though

he's far away, and when he wrings out of me all that I have said and done this day, I shall crawl and cower under him ; I know I shall ;" and the poor dwarf hid his large face in his fat hands and sobbed aloud.

Hugo was touched with his uncouth grief, and endeavoured to console him ; he even offered to take him into his own service : the dwarf looked up wistfully and gratefully at his kind words, but he started with indignation at the offer.

"Service !" he exclaimed. "No, no ; no service for me. The preceptor knows my value, and may employ me as he lists, but never will I do the bidding of any mortal man save his."

"If he *be* mortal," said Hugo gravely. The dwarf turned a look of fearful inquiry on my brother's face, and then hiding his own, once more sobbed loudly.

The turnkey now entered to remove the remains of Hugo's almost untasted meal, and the dwarf letting himself slowly down from the high-backed chair, saluted Hugo solemnly, and retired with the gaoler.

The day was gone ; twilight shadowed the old Tower, and Hugo was set free. His heart bounded as he heard that word pronounced, and he could scarcely restrain his impatience, when the dwarf presented himself with a bundle of puritanical garments and insisted on his assuming them.

“ At the best of times,” said the little man, “ it were dangerous for a swash-buckler like thee to be seen in these parts of the city ; but now the people are so wild at the escape, as they term it, of that perverse old man and his spy daughters, that they would mob thee like a mad dog and rend thee like a garment—yea, verily.”

Hugo was obliged to admit the force of this reasoning ; he donned the puritan attire, sallied forth into the street, and found his way to the Barbican. There was the dwarf before him, holding a good horse by the bridle, and apostrophizing it with great affection ; he assisted the young Cavalier to mount, wished him a good journey, and disappeared.

Hugo rode on unquestioned through the town,

travelled as fast and as far as his horse could carry him, and after a brief halt, and some risk from our sentries, (owing to his puritanical disguise), at length reached Oxford in safety.

I need not dwell upon the happiness with which we brothers met ; upon the hours,—too few—we passed together, before we separated once again to meet no more.

The Queen had now arrived at Oxford, where constant festivities celebrated Her Majesty's return, and the brave battle of Roundway Down. Court splendour and chivalrous pageantry revived, and for those, who could banish thought (and they were not few) the aspect of life was brilliant. The Queen was still beautiful; if her gracious brow had assumed a shade of thought, it well became the resting-place of a crown. That brow was still most dazzling fair; her eyes glanced very brightly, and could reward or reprove wherever they fell. Her mouth was equally expressive, and if it pouted sometimes, no subject could complain of that which his monarch witnessed far oftener.

Her Majesty's grace and spirit in her withdrawing room was admirable, and she had been so long with the army of the North that she had imbibed a martial taste, right well adapted to her soldierly court. Besides the reviving influence of her presence, her Majesty had brought men and arms and money, all which were badly wanted ; for a few days, accordingly, every one was in high spirits and all seemed to promise well.

But alas ! the Goddess of Discord seemed to have arrived in the train of her most gracious Majesty. Almost instantly, two hostile parties—those of the King's and Queen's favourites—became formed ; and while their royal master and mistress continued fond as ever, their servants were almost at daggers-drawn. Digby was then in his element ; every hour had its intrigue, every college its party. Some few, as Lords Falkland, Southampton and Carnarvon stood neutral, looking sadly on. Edward Hyde became cautious and reserved—old Secretary Nicholas hung his head more than ever, and shook it not unfrequently. Prince

Rupert alone was still himself, preserving his high spirits, and usual bearing alike towards courtier and soldier—finding fault occasionally with the lack of discipline and swearing roundly at them all.

“Hastings,” he said to me one day, “since the money came with our good Queen, we are poorer than ever, as it seems to me. Beshrew me if I can get enough to keep powder in the men’s bandoliers, or dry bread in their honest mouths. I am now endeavouring to raise money on the pledge of the first town we win; and to be candid, I am about to begin with you.”

I smiled as I produced my only purse, and rolled out its contents upon the table.

“There,” said I, “are three shillings and one groat, which is all that I have in my possession, or am likely to have at present. My troop is two months in arrears of pay, and your Highness knows, that since I joined the standard, I have never received one farthing from his Majesty.”

“Tut, man!” said the Prince, “I know

you've no money, well enough—who the devil has? but you've got the next best thing—credit, and if you and two or three other reputable men will join me, we may be able to raise a few hundreds, to put our troops in marching trim for Bristol. There's a rich town for you, my friend, and, I promise you, a good paymaster, when the royal standard and the gallows do their duty."

I made some demur to giving his Highness my credit, however welcome he would have been to my money; but I promised that if I could not furnish him with the latter in the space of a fortnight, the former should be at his service.

"Honestly said," exclaimed the Prince, "I think however the word of a Christian has still some weight, even among our money-lenders; and, as I shall pledge your money or credit for such short space, I count upon the precious commodity at once. Good bye."

I had been for some time anxious that Hugo should revisit our long deserted home, but thank Heaven, I did not propose it to him. So

soon, however, as he heard the Prince's request, he at once declared his desire to return to Beaumanoir, as he had now the excuse of necessity and the King's service.

"I shall see Phœbe once more!" said he, joyfully, "and within the fortnight I hope again to embrace you, and furnish you with the means to redeem your pledge. The sale of my spare horse will furnish me with the means to travel, and the pass I received on leaving the Tower, will carry me through all danger. One thing I have to ask you. Bryan is now quite recovered, he is brave and trustworthy, and wondrously cunning for his years. Let me have him with me to send him back to you if there be need."

This proposition gave me great pleasure, and Bryan himself seemed to rejoice in the prospect of escaping from Oxford, where the story of his late adventure was by no means forgotten or losing strength.

The very next night I saw my brave brother depart. I accompanied him as far as the first out-posts of the enemy, and as I clasped

him to my heart, I felt an ominous foreboding. He, on the contrary, was in high spirits, and looked as brightly happy as if he were immortal—as indeed his better part must be—though the form I loved so well be—dust!

CHAPTER VI.

Ritter, treue Schwesterliebe
Widmet euch dieß Herz ;
Fordert keine andre Liebe
Denn es macht mir Schmerz.

* * * * *

Eurer Augen stilles weinen
Kann ich nicht erschen.

THE fortnight of which the Prince and I spoke so lightly, is gone by ! I am sitting alone in my desolate chamber. A letter of many pages is in my hand : the writing is that of my dearly loved and noble-hearted brother. It is characteristically buoyant-looking and bold, yet delicate withal, and finely, though rapidly executed. In imagination I once more grasp the hand that wrote it ; and I feel upon my breast the throbbing of as true a

heart as ever beat. But I break from my reverie and read :

“ To the Lord Hastings at Oxford, these ; haste, post haste.

“ My dear Brother,

“ As regards the chief business that I came upon, I have sped prosperously beyond my hopes. I was only once obliged to use my pass, and Bryan was only *once* taken prisoner on the road. I need scarcely tell you that he escaped ; and I actually found him here before me. Wherefore I was welcomed with blazing bonfires, and happy looks, and loud greetings, and good cheer. I need not now talk of some saddened faces that came, while they welcomed my return, to inquire how those died who shall return to them no more ; and how earnestly they listened to each almost forgotten word or deed relating to their dead that I could then recal.

“ Well—I shook hands with all the good old yeomen, and most of their dames and pretty daughters, and we all tried to be as gay as if my father, of whom we in truth were thinking, was there amongst us still. In truth, it was something of a saddening joy ; and the very

day looked dark, and the old house seemed grown grey without, and awful sorts of echoes have established themselves within. With all the joy of finding myself once more under our ancestral roof, and so near Phoebe, it was the saddest night I ever passed since that terrible time when ——

“But to return to my story. Morning came and brought brighter thoughts and prospects. When I descended to the hall, I found it full of our friendly farmers; and the terrace, and the stone steps all were crowded with honest loyal faces. Oh, Heaven! what a pure and exalted happiness it would be to live in peace amongst a happy and a grateful tenantry, employed in the Divine work of improving and softening their rugged natures, with only the Divine reward of a self-approving and un-reproving conscience. Well! that blessed time *may* come, and ‘Our King may enjoy his own again,’ as the song says; and as he no doubt will, when the King of kings sees fit.

“I need not tell you that my first look was directed towards the Castle: there all seemed unchanged; and I learned that the family had returned safely, and that Sir Janus was doing

well. I then found leisure to harangue our tenants. I told them what honour you had won; how bravely their brethren had fought under the King's honoured standard, and I confessed to them that, both officers and men, were sorely in want of money.

“At once I saw fifty hands thrust into doublet and jerkin pockets, and though several came out empty, many were well-filled. The poor fellows said nothing; their honest hearts seemed too full of generous impulse to talk about it; but they struggled almost fiercely to the oak table in the hall, and clapped down their handfuls of hard-earned coin with a vehemence that made it ring. Meanwhile there was loud talking and many whispers, and several young men speeded off towards the village.

“Having finished my harangue, I mixed among the people, making inquiries and receiving kind wishes on all sides. Bryan had possessed himself of pen, ink, and paper, at the buttery hatch, and was quietly entering the names of each of the contributors: they seemed

quite satisfied, when a nod informed them that the name was down ; they appeared to make no account of the sums that were to stand opposite to it.

“ At length I entered the house in order to break my fast, and had scarcely done so when I was disturbed by the sound of armed men. Hastening to the window, I recognized with joy and pride, some hundreds of our young yeomen, each as well mounted and equipped as those that followed me hence a year ago, and the whole far better disciplined. I was so moved at this unexpected proof of loyalty and devotion to our cause, that my voice faltered when I attempted to address them. But it mattered not, for gallant cheers and well-blown trumpets would have drowned the voice of Stentor.

“ Let me know with speed whether you will accept the services of these good men. If they be vital to the King’s cause, let them march away in the name of righteousness ; but if not absolutely wanted, oh let them still remain in their happy homes ! they have well earned a

right to do so by their prompt readiness to leave them. A year ago I should have asked no question, but which was the shortest road?—

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“ 9 P.M.—I had intended to dispatch this letter to-night by a trusty post, but there is now no need of haste. I find the Roundheads have been making a foray in the adjoining hamlets, even so near as Woolston. Under these circumstances, the men ought not to be taken from hence, however willing they may be to go. They tell me also that the Roundheads have established a strong post only nine miles from here, and that they threaten destruction to all relating to our malignant family.

“ For the tenantry, I shall leave them to compound or not, as they please; but well I know that you will agree with me that this old and honoured house shall never be polluted by a rebel's foot, whilst one of our name remains to defend it, or perish in its ruins. If they come in great force, doubtless it will be difficult to defend so wide a compass with so scant a garrison; but we have brave examples, even in this war, of what a few stout hearts can

do in defending their home. With the old servants of the house, the foresters and others, I can muster about thirty fighting men. Arms there are in plenty, and provisions there will be before morning. Ammunition alone we are rather scant in.

“ To the volunteer troop, of which I spoke this morning, I have given no fighting orders ; I have even recommended them to compound with the Roundheads, as they are a mere isolated force, without support in these parts, and must soon fall into the enemy’s hands. If any of them, however, were without homes or families, and bent on fighting, I told them that they should find a welcome amongst our little garrison at the Hall.

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“ I have been to the Castle, and I have seen Phœbe ! Eager as I was, I went thither on foot, and often lingered on the way by spots that spoke eloquently to my recollection. In our childhood nature seems closely interwoven with our sympathies, and long, long afterwards some once-loved flower may gladden the dimmed eye, some scented breeze will bring back boyish

colour to the weather-beaten cheek. So I found at least. Memories rose up around me at every step. Every wild flower seemed, like those in Eastern gardens, to convey a meaning—a message from the invisible world, where the soul of dreamers oftentimes wanders truant from the body; and even then, as I pressed up the steep hill's side, my soul felt solemn, if not sad, while my thoughtless heart bounded with mere animal joy.

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“I entered the long terrace where the beechen bower was trained into shape by our boyish hands; I felt sure that Phœbe was hidden there; yet scarcely hidden, for I could soon trace the shadow of a form, resting motionless, when the sea-breeze sets all the smaller shadows dancing. As I approached, I saw that she was sleeping, or rather tranced in the soft lassitude of the warm noon. Her eyelids and long lashes drooped languidly, but ever and anon a heart-struggling sigh seemed to prove that her soul was as little in harmony with its shrine as mine was. A letter was in her hand, half crushed, but open, so that I could have read it. I scarcely breathed

for fear of disturbing that beautiful repose : it was a pleasure to linger there, and think that even so, if my life were crushed out of me in one of these wild broils, my disembodied spirit might still be allowed thus to gaze upon and watch over her.

“ At length a gust of wind came rushing up from the sea ; it murmured through the distant woods, and roared among the turrets of the castle ; then swooping, seemed to dive beneath the beechen branches, and flung a rich and wavy tress of Phœbe’s dishevelled hair across her bosom. She started as if conscious that some one had been watching her, hastily thrust the letter within her boddice, and then looked timidly all round. I moved gently forwards, and caught her eye ; she shrieked as if in pain, and then turned from me, hiding her face in her clasped hands.

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“ When we were quietly seated side by side once more, where we had been used to meet for so many years, she grew quite calm.

“ ‘ I ought to have guessed that you were come,’ she said, ‘ for we saw the bonfires blazing

round the Hall, and crowds of people standing there. But my poor father has forbidden all communication even with your side of the river, and I thought those rejoicings might be only in honour of some loyal victory. I expected, I ought to say, I hoped, never to have seen you until peace was restored ; and indeed I scarcely thought it possible that Hugo Hastings would have left the standard of his King to spy out the retreat of a poor country girl.'

"I started with surprise at these words. It is true that the last were spoken with something of her old, merry manner, but they jarred upon my ear. I told her as coldly as I could tell *her* anything, that my duty had brought me home, and that only for a few days. That if her wish was indeed not to see me, that wish should be obeyed ; but that I little expected to hear reproachful words from her, and in such a spot ; a spot sacred to the best happiness and hope that I had ever known. She seemed touched, and laying her hand upon my arm, said, soothingly,

" ' Forgive me, Hugo ; my trials have made me very wayward, and yet I sometimes forget

advancing years, and fancy you are still my brother, as you used to be.'

"As she spoke, her eyes filled with tears, and she turned them towards the sea, with a fond but unconscious gaze. A dark suspicion, a most desolate feeling then seized my heart; her love was not mine; she was lost to me, and if to me, then to herself! Heaven is my witness, that even in those moments of agony I felt more for her than for myself—for her stained truth, her lost honour, her deceitfulness. Oh! I loved her far too well for anger—for reproach; yet I knew not which way to turn—how to escape to solitude and silence, much less how to speak: it was surely Digby's letter that she treasured!

"And as I stood, thus racked with torturing doubts, she still gazed calmly on the distant sea, forgetting my very presence in the visionary thought that she had conjured up and gloated on. After a fierce struggle with a selfish fiend, I seemed to conquer. Suddenly the sharp pangs that had wrung my heart were soothed; a veil seemed to fall from my eyes, and I saw before me only the dear, sainted sister of my

childhood. I saw her exposed to evil and trying times—motherless and almost friendless, sent to encounter the temptations of the world. Her surpassing beauty, her guileless innocence, her vivid fancy—all so many baits to lure the spoiler. Her dread of the new doctrines made her shrink from the stern communion of the Puritan, and her father's fears had banished the old Chaplain from his precious charge. And thus she was indeed alone and lost. Lost to me at least, for with that air of solemn sadness, that seraphic countenance, *she could not be guilty.*

“That conviction overcame me with a pleasure that momentarily banished all my pain ; I sank upon my knee and prayed, gratefully, hopefully, and resignedly. Her ears caught her murmured name ; she turned, she lifted up her voice and wept ; she knelt beside me.

* * * *

“As I strode away from the Castle, down among the dark woods, where the waterfall shone white and ghost-like in the moonlight, I scarce could recognize in myself the same

being who, buoyant, climbed those heights a few hours before. A whirlwind had, as it were, swept through my soul, bearing away all the glad hopes and trifling fancies that once were nurtured there, dancing like motes in its sunshine. All these were gone; and instead, a profoundly calm sensation seemed to reign there, joyless, but firm and self-supporting. The alarm-bell that had interrupted our interview was still tolling vehemently from the belfry in our old home. I knew its purport well, and I knew that a stern fight must soon follow. But I heard it without emotion, as if it and all else were things of course; life and death appeared of very little consequence. My whole thoughts were occupied with the mystery of woman's nature—so like, yet so unlike to our own.

“She had told me all; she confessed to me that she loved me with more than a sister's love, yet only as a sister loves. But her heart's passion was for another, differing from me, she said, as darkness from the light; dark and dissembling, though daring too—of much evil

repute, and even perhaps inconstant—yet—how dear !

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“ I found myself at home, without knowing how I came there, and I wakened suddenly to a sense of responsibility and duty. The hall had been hastily barricaded ; self-appointed sentries patrolled the walls ; half a score of hard-riden horses were held by a yeoman trooper at the door, and two wounded men lay stretched within the hall, having their wounds bound up. A few words informed me of what had passed : a reconnoitring party of rebel horse had been observed approaching our house. Our troop had turned out to repel them ; the alarm-bell was rung, and the hall put in a state of defence. Our yeomen had utterly routed the rebels, and pursued them as far as the moor, where they encountered a considerable force, and were repelled in turn. They learned from some prisoners that Beaumanoir was to be attacked the next morning.

“ My measures were soon taken. I en-

deavoured to think with your heart, if not with your head, and I determined at all risks to defend our home. I peremptorily dismissed the greater part of the troops, for whom I had indeed no ammunition. I commanded them to make the best terms they could with the invaders, and with them such advice and thanks as I could express, I bade them all farewell. Some twenty I permitted to remain. I have thus a garrison of fifty, with four falconets, and ammunition sufficient for some hours. Just as I had completed all my preparations, the old Chaplain of the Castle came in.

“ You know that since the Roundheads have waxed strong in this country, Sir Janus has requested him to absent himself altogether ; and since then the poor old man has lived as he best could amongst our farmers. He was most welcome to me in every way. His presence seemed to sanctify our cause : a brave spirit shone in his eyes ; and his voice, while it spoke of another world to which we were all approaching, talked cheerfully of the duty that yet remained to be done in this. I promise

you, my brother, that our eve of battle has been spent in no noisy revelling ; and that whatever report you hear, you will not have cause to blush for us as Christians or as soldiers.

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“ It is now midnight : I am about to make up this long letter, in order that the bearer may be safely out of the Hall before our enemies surround us. I wanted to send Bryan, but he refused flatly. The messenger brings such moneys as he could conveniently carry. He will remain hidden in the woods until the fate of to-morrow’s fight is decided : if it goes against us, he will depart alone ; if we succeed, he will be soon followed by yours in life and death,

“ HUGO.

“ P. S. Written at day-break. The enemy are advancing in two divisions ; one in close column along the covered way ; the other loosely scattered through the wood. I have at length prevailed on the old Chaplain to leave us for Phœbe’s sake. I convinced him that she

required his care now more than we did. He has done for us all that his high office (as I indeed feel it to be) can perform ; henceforth we must work without ceasing. The enemy have heavy artillery with them and no provisions : it will be the affair of a few hours. Farewell."

So Hugo's letter ended.

CHAPTER VII.

How died he ? Death to life is crown or blame.

SAMPSON AGONISTES.

I'll chaunt thine elegy with trumpet sounds,
And carve thine epitaph with bloody wounds.

MONTROSE.

I LAID down the letter. But an hour before, as I had been sitting alone, my mind oppressed with foreboding thoughts, Bryan had knocked softly at my door, and entered timidly. His face was pale as death, and careworn, as if years had passed over him since last we met. He did not speak ; he did not even look me in the face ; but as he sought about his person for this letter, his large cloak fell off, and disclosed a dress so torn and scorched, and clotted with thick blood, as to be scarcely recognizable. At length he produced the packet, and handed it to me in silence.

I felt a spasm at my heart. I saw that all

was over, and I prepared to set myself to my mournful task. As soon as I could command my voice, I said to him,

“I am sure you have done faithfully and well; leave me alone and refresh yourself, then return and tell me all.”

He seized my offered hand in both of his and pressed it fervently, but he shed not a single tear, and he spoke not a word, as he retired and left me to my task.

When I had finished and he returned, he thus told his story.

“Sir Hugo finished that letter, and bid me once more take it to you: but I knew that he was too noble and generous to insist upon a poor fellow’s disgracing himself, so I refused, and he then laid his commands on Richard Hurd, who had his sword-arm shot off in the beginning of the war. I was obliged to hurry him out of the castle; and it was as much as he could do, with all his cunning, to get clear of the enemy, for they now came pouring round the old hall like water. Sir Hugo would let no man blow a match or draw a trigger until he demanded, in all form of war,

why they came thus armed against a peaceful household—

“The parley was short. The rebels swore solemnly they would not spare a single soul alive if the house was not instantly surrendered; and not Sir Hugo’s voice alone, but that of fifty gallant fellows with him shouted back a scornful defiance to such summons. Then the trumpet retired, and the moment his white flag disappeared, out spoke their heavy guns—five of them—all well placed and served, and the stout old hall shook all over, but only as if it was rousing itself; for the next moment our falconets opened fire from the keep, and the best marksmen began to fire slow, but sure, and in a few minutes the enemy’s fire slackened.

“This lull did not last long however; for while three of their culverins kept up a fire as before, two others were wheeled round under cover and ranged opposite to the great gate. There is no denying it, the Roundheads stood to their work like men, and never flinched under as hot a fire as fifty pieces ever dealt out with right good will. They were in great force too; and the

day was calm and heavy, and the smoke soon hid every object from our eyes, so that we had orders to cease firing and spare ammunition. Then the great guns opened on the gate, and the round shot came crashing in ; but there was such a pile of barricades behind, that it only gave way slowly, and the court-yard was filled with splinters before there was a passage for a single man.

“ Well ! the enemy fought for that one passage as if it was the gate of heaven, and I hope some found it so, for many a stout fellow died there. And still they came on, and still our marksmen struck them down from the loop-holes, and the few that reached the gate fell by Sir Hugo’s hand, and the three or four that stood near him. It was wonderful to see him ; so fierce against the enemy, at the same moment that he had gentle and kind words for us , and as quick an eye to mark a brave deed within, as to watch the danger from without. We fought, I scarce know how, but not a hand was idle, for two full hours without a moment’s pause, and then there was a few minutes’ breathing time, broken by a louder discharge of artillery than

ever, for now the Roundheads had got their five great guns all in position right opposite the gate.

“The last splinter of the barricades was soon gone, and a storm against the gate was then made by a forlorn of three or four hundred men. We dropped a man for every bullet as they came, but you hardly missed them. On came the column, bearing down our defence by sheer weight as they encumbered our pikes with their dead bodies. So they won the entrance hall, and we fought it foot by foot against them; Sir Hugo, ever last to be beaten back, and so calm and destructive all the while !

“We made a good stand in the long gallery, but our men were getting faint, and not a third of them were left alive; those that were wounded still made the most of their last strength to stab the enemy that went charging and trampling over them. Oh ! there was many a terrible cry rang through the old house that day, but not one for mercy, except to Heaven.

“At last we were beaten back out of the gallery where the dead lay thick. By this time, the enemy was in possession everywhere, and Sir Hugo whispered me to make for the private sally-port that opened on the moat. So we fell back slowly, still fighting hand to hand and foot to foot; and Sir Hugo was still calm as marble, only when we were passing the door of your father’s old sleeping room, he cast one look upon it—so bright and happy—as if he saw him there once more welcoming him. At last we reached the turn down to the postern, and Sir Hugo said to me: ‘Now do my bidding—lead these few brave fellows that are left, to the gate, and show them where to swim the moat. I will keep this narrow passage till you close the gate. God bless you friend—farewell, and give my love to my dear brother.’

“Bryan here faltered in his narrative, and to save his feelings, I exclaimed: ‘And you obeyed, and left him.’

“‘Leave him!’ he exclaimed; ‘You *know* I

did not.—I told him I had forgotten the way of the bolt, and that we should all be lost if he did'nt open the door himself; and, as he was too wise to stand debating there, he left me,—Heaven be praised!—to keep the pass while he opened the little gate, and let out the men.'

“Meanwhile I fought with the strength, because I had the pride, of a dozen men in me; and with the corner, and my sword broken short, I had greatly the advantage of their long pikes. But my heart failed me when I heard a foot behind me, and I was thrust aside, and there was Sir Hugo, as he had been for the last hour, breast to breast with the pikemen. Just then a loud voice shouted:

“‘Front rank, kneel:’—the three pikemen in front of us dropt down, and a pistol ball came whistling by. Sir Hugo fell—yes, he fell. But if you had seen the blessed smile he turned upon me, you would not, if you could, recal him there before you, to the proudest hour of his life. I snatched his

brave body—I don't know what strength I had—and, before the pikemen had recovered themselves, I had carried him out upon the step behind the postern and swung the gate to against the enemy, and barred it with my broken sword. I then tried to raise his head—but he was dead—entirely at rest. So suddenly—so still—while the cries of hell were raging round, and the home of his father was burning over his head!

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“I swam the moat unheeded, for the flames were now blazing high, and the plunderers were struggling to quench them, not only for the plunder's sake, but for their own lives. There were plenty of them to do it; and, to give the devil his due, they were well commanded; so, before I reached the wood, the fire gave way to thick smoke, and when I came away, the old Hall looked in the distance almost as usual—except the wing where the family used to live; the roof-tree was gone, the doors and windows burnt away,

and only their black marks remaining on the walls.

“I found Richard Hurd at the place appointed; daring as he was, his heart seemed gone from him when he saw the old Hall blaze up.

“‘It’s all over with the cause,’ said he, ‘and I’ll find my way to the sea, and beg my way to foreign parts, for England is England no longer.’

“He had buried the money under the tree, and was going to bury the letter there too; for, he said, he could never bear to see your honour, and to break your heart with the story. So I bid him go his ways, and I went mine, disguised with a Roundhead’s arms and his orange scarf, and begging my way as a wounded soldier. This made people keep clear of me; and at last I found a rebel trooper’s horse tied to the door of an alehouse; I thought it would just suit my armour, and I rode away upon it to Newark; and so on through one chance and another to this spot, without sleep but what I found in the saddle.”

Thus ended the story of my brother's fate. Since then I have been an altered man. The war that I loathed has become my great interest ; my heart is wrapped up in it. I love fighting for its own fierce sake, and my name is become a terror to the enemy. I seem to bear a charmed life ; bullets glance from my armour, swords wielded by the stoutest arm give way before the sweep of mine, and my vengeful war-cry finds no return. All things seem possible to me in battle ; I chafe only because there is so little to be done, and that little seems such child's play.

At the storm of Bristol I led the forlorn. As we rushed along, I heard the death-cry of half my party. We bounded over the fallen stones, and won the breach. A new parapet had been raised within, and my stormers recoiled from the steady line of fire, and the palisado of pikes that defended it. That *was* a moment of high excitement, and it carried me through. I rushed at the parapet to leap it, but a halberd thrust me back without a wound. The halberdier endeavoured to regain his weapon ; I clung

to it, and so was helped over by the enemy. My comrades followed bravely, and the parapet was won.*

It is, God wot ! not with vanity, but with shame, that I record these reckless acts. A mere animal, if goaded with half my inward pain, might have done as much. Never shall I forget the self-reproach, the rebuke that I felt, when soon after, in the fight, or rather the pursuit, on Auborn Chace, the Prince rode up to me, and laying his hand upon my arm, exclaimed, " Enough—remember you are not a mere trooper." It was perhaps the only time that Rupert ever attempted to restrain an officer in battle.

* A similar case is related in Campden, of Edward Stanley, at Lutzen, in 1580 : he mounted on his enemy's pike and won the town.

CHAPTER VIII.

What joy can human things to us afford,
When we see perish thus, by sad events,
Ill men and bloody accidents,
The best cause, and best man that ever drew a sword.

COWLEY.

ON the evening of that day we lay at Newburg; the enemy were strongly posted on an adjoining heath. At night Falkland proposed to me to visit the outposts with him, and as we had been lately somewhat estranged, I accepted his invitation with pleasure. His reserved and almost mournful temper was suited well with mine, and for some time we walked along in contented silence.

It was towards the end of September. A soft and mellow starlight suffused the sky. The night was so profoundly still, that we could hear the various hum of life on either hand, as we passed along the line of sentinels between the quarters of friend and foe. Now faint snatches of carousing songs, and now some strain of hymn-like music stole upon the ear; the clank of the armourer's forge, the neighing of horses, and the measured tramp of the patrols, were all by turns faintly audible; but they only served to render more profound the intervals of silence.

Falkland was the first to speak:—"How exquisite," said he, "is the contrast between the wild, maddening work of war, and the deep religious rest that now spreads around us and above. Rest! how much happiness is concentrated in that delicious word! Methinks it is almost a pleasant creed which the schoolmen preach, that our disembodied spirits shall repose after their life-long human travail, before they enter on the more active blessedness of heaven. I have passed the last hour with Jeremy Taylor,

who has been preaching to me from that happy text, ‘ There is a rest for the people of God ;’ when the stain of sin may be wiped from our souls even as that of blood from our bright swords. I feel happier than I have done since these troubles began ; I feel a certainty that *my* end is near.’

“ I would not argue with you,” said I, “ against an impression that gives you so much pleasure ; I would rather participate with you in your solemn hope.”

“ And yet,” said Falkland, “ *you* have, humanly speaking, much to live for. You have youth, and health, and an honoured name, that, come to our cause what will, may win you prosperous days in some happier land. Above all, if what I hear be true, you are happy in the love of one who might make a blessing of this mortal life. Yes,” he continued in a tone of mild reproach, “ when once, long ago, I ventured to lay open my heart to you, you were not candid with me.”

“ Because I felt that I had no right to be so,” I replied ; “ and even now I cannot imagine

any grounds that you can have for asserting what I do not myself dare to believe."

"I will tell you," resumed Falkland. "This is the last time that we shall be together, I feel well assured; and I have no desire for concealment, especially as I may unconsciously have wronged you. You know that mysterious man whom they call Hezekiah: of his personal history I have no right to speak, for his dreadful secret is his own; but of his relations with one whom I now hope you may one day possess, I mean to make no secret. I have already told you how I first became acquainted with this man. He was grateful to me, as far as gratitude was compatible with the stronger impulses of his nature. With an eye which nothing escapes, he perceived the more than interest that I took in the person of whom we spoke. He dared to tell me of it, and to reproach me with it as a sin. I never felt as if such pure and purifying thoughts as I cherished towards her *could* be sin; but, perhaps they were so.

"In the course of my vain efforts to obtain a treaty with the Puritans, I often saw this

man. Under my pass, and in disguise, he frequently visited Oxford. After your expedition with Lady d'Aubigny, he came to me about the plot, to compromise for the life of that wretched Waller. I spoke to him of his young patroness, and his manner changed: he said vehemently that he himself had been infatuated by her—he called himself unworthy—a broken branch. He proceeded to relate to me what happened at Reading, and in short, he told me all that you doubtless remember full well about your prison interview.”

“ ‘And will she marry Hastings?’ I inquired.

“ ‘Never,’ he replied, triumphantly. ‘When I reproached her with preferring her own passion to the interests of her cause and her faith, she replied proudly that I was presumptuous. That if she could not control her emotions, she was at least mistress of her actions, and could and would afford a life-long proof of her devotion to the cause.’

“I have now told you all I know. I do not believe in such determinations as she expressed; I do believe that they will vanish with

their temporary motive, especially if she ever discovers, what doubtless you are well aware of, that this Hezekiah himself loves her—perhaps unconsciously—but with all the consuming force of his ardent nature. Those are mistaken who assert that two great passions are incompatible in the same breast; nay, they rage the more fiercely from their contact.”

This speech that was meant to soothe, alarmed me. The mention of this Puritan, too, was almost as distasteful to me as his presence. Every man, I presume, is haunted by some other who is sure to encounter him at every trying juncture of his life, and Hezekiah seemed the incarnation of my evil destiny. I replied to Falkland with some asperity, I fear, for he rejoined in a more determined tone:

“No, the influence that this man possesses has *not* been obtained by unlawful arts. His is simply the power that strong minds (which are few) possess over weaker ones (which are many). And then he has the supernatural stimulus that high and sustained enthusiasm imparts to his natural great gifts; nay, even a slight

gleam of insanity is turned to good account among the various elements that compose his character. He is most unlike what I am in every respect; he seems made for, if not by, these times that are destroying me; wasting my heart away, until every hope I once held is merged in a longing for peace—peace—peace!”

The manner in which this wise and good man pronounced that word was profoundly touching: the echo of them seemed to linger on the midnight; and long after the lips that uttered them were cold, fancy brought back their sound. The word Peace, I hope and believe, might be carved upon his tomb as his best epitaph.

I did not dare to interrupt his reverie, but it was soon broken by a messenger from the King: he came in hot haste to seek Lord Falkland.

“Farewell!” said he, extending his hand and smiling a most sad sweet smile, “you see the Secretary for War cannot be long spared!”

He turned to depart, and I saw him no more, until, to use his own prophetic words, “he

was out of his misery," and lay at rest upon the field of honour.

I wandered forward alone, pondering on the last words of this gifted, but eccentric man. So absorbed was I in thought, that the gradual silence stealing over the hostile armies, seemed sudden to me, when, at length, I became conscious of it. The stillness of the heavens appeared to have come down like dew upon the earth.

Amongst all the various sights that strike upon the sense or the imagination, there is none more memorable than that of a sleeping army, relaxed in the deep and charmed slumber that precedes its hour of fierce and supernatural trial and excitement. The grim veteran, the home-dreaming boy are there, side-by-side, with death-dealing weapons for a pillow; breathing heavily in deep unconscious enjoyment of their roofless rest. Even the poor horses have bowed their gallant heads, and forgotten to feed upon the scanty herbage. * * *

A faint streak of light is visible upon the distant hills: some anxious eye has been

watching for it, and suddenly, as the sound of the cannon follows upon its flash, rings the blast of a trumpet in answer to the dawn. The sleeping posts start into life: drums rattle forth the *reveillé*; standards are unfurled; and man, the innocent sleeper, is roused to his work of slaughter.

Returning hastily to my quarters, I found a glad surprise awaiting me. My cousin, Harry Hotspur, was there, just risen from my bed, and in the act of emptying his morning draught. He called it his first, but he would have found some difficulty in defining what was his last.

“Welcome, welcome, my gallant kinsman!” he exclaimed; “luck for once is favourable to me. I only got to Oxford yesterday, about some affairs with those idle rascals that they call men of business. I heard that the King was likely to be here, with good chances of a battle, so I flung my business to the devil, and rode over to have a hand in the brave sport. The blessing of the Church crowned my knight errantry, for I found a reverend

divine inquiring his way to meet you, and not sorry to have my escort. He is a sorrowful, but a brave old man, and I fear me has no pleasant tidings for your ear. Now take my advice and let us do battle first, and if we live, you will have time to listen to him; and if not—why there's no reason we should cloud our brows under this bright world's last sunshine."

It was the old chaplain of the castle. I followed my cousin's advice, not because I was afraid of any tidings he could bring, but because, wearied with long travel, he was now sleeping and I would not waken him. The trumpets had already sounded to horse, and my cousin and I hastened to our post. My troop had become a mere skeleton of some five-and-twenty men, and was incorporated into Prince Rupert's regiment. I had mounted my cousin on his old friend Satan, and he was in high spirits as he rode in among his former comrades, giving and receiving warm greetings from them all.

He was the very type of a Cavalier, as that

character will go down to history, because such as he, formed the most prominent, if not the most numerous class; chivalrous, joyous, and generous; full, nevertheless, of all those faults that enemies find easiest to denounce, and friends to forgive. He now roused up my spirits to a better pitch, and may thus, perhaps, have preserved my life on that fatal day. Henceforward we were comrades together, and out of our two characters, apparently so dissonant, we somehow or other made an almost perfect harmony.

The battle of Newbury was fought with the finest material, and the worst conduct of any throughout the war; but I am not now about to enter into its details. Penmen and lords-in-waiting laid out the array, and soldiers had to extricate the army from its difficulties as best they might. Our artillery scarcely sent a shot among the enemy throughout the day; cavalry had the posts of infantry, and foot were obliged to do duty as horsemen and dragoons. Since the destruction of the greater part

of my own troop had transferred the remainder into the Prince's regiment, I had fought among them merely as a volunteer. For many reasons I had always refused a command, and I now rode with Harry Hotspur along the lines in the King's train.

"A good many friends are missing there," exclaimed my cousin, pointing to Byron's regiment. "But here's my Lord Falkland, trim and gallant as a bridegroom, as if he had dressed his ruffles and his smiles for the occasion. And there, by Jove! is that traitor Holland, looking as blandly loyal, as if he was a gentleman. I would give all the plunder of yonder rebels that he were in their ranks, and I within sword's length of him this day. There goes Sunderland, a true Cavalier, though he has some womanish notions about wine, *et cetera*; and there, the good Carnarvon, a modern crusader, and a right noble gentleman. There is Goring, too, looking as careless as if he was going to lead off a dance, and not a charge;—by my faith, it will be a dance

of death. There's our king of comedy, Mohun, too, turned soldier, instead of player, and about to practice tragedy. And old Allen, of the cock-pit, and Master Hart and Robinson, a whole troop——"

My cousin's speech was broken off by a sudden and disorderly advance, which scarcely left us time to resume our places. Old Blount was near me, as my covering man ; Bryan now rode proudly as an esquire, and was a candidate for knighthood.

We got into action as best we could ; we fought as best we might. Never had I seen so bloody a day, and yet when evening fell none could tell who was the winner. There was, however, no doubt as to the greatest losers : Falkland fell, and with him, the flower of the King's chivalry, noble and gentle. It was a never to be forgotten sight, when that gallant brotherhood was brought together to be buried. Three friends lay together, side by side, on one black banner taken from the enemy—Falkland, Sunderland, Carnarvon—their plumed helmets

at their feet, their hands crossed in Crusader fashion on their breasts. And so one grave received them. They had a King for their chief mourner, and the Author of "Holy Dying" to minister their funeral rite.

CHAPTER IX.

How now ? ye secret black and midnight hags—
What is't ye do ?

A deed without a name.

SHAKESPERE.

My personal recollections of this battle are very vivid, and, to me, memorable. I have already mentioned that the skeleton of my troop was regimented with Prince Rupert's, but his regiment was itself become a skeleton. Three times he led us through a shattering fire of artillery against the City train-bands, and as often were we flung backward from their palisades of pikes, or perished under their

fire: more than one half of his brave regiment fell before the sun was high. After that, finding it impossible to rally them again, he rode away to the foot, to endeavour with them to retrieve the day; by that time the whole field was in a general *mêlée*, as far as the cavalry were concerned. The foot however stood firmly together on either side, exchanging hot musket fire, as from so many fortifications, while the horse fought, each man where he could soonest find an enemy. My yeomen, indeed, kept close to me, and I strove to apply their strength where it was most needed; but with scarcely a dozen men, I might almost as well have fought alone.

Hotspur had been summoned to accompany the Prince; I had been left to rally what men I could, and strange to say, I felt quite lonely on that crowded field. Bryan had fallen wounded in the first charge; my cornet had been slain by my side; my yeomen were dispersed with their wearied and now useless horses, and Blount alone remained to me. That faithful servant seemed to forget his own

existence in watching over mine. When I was struggling and trampling among fierce enemies, there was he parrying the same weapon, and almost dealing the same strokes. When I had stopped to breathe my horse, or been abandoned by the Roundheads for some easier opponent, there was Blount, too, quiet and observant; wiping his huge moustache, it might be, with his well-worn gauntlet, or arranging some strap about me that had been disordered.

It was during some such momentary pause that Goring came sweeping by, his horse all foam, and maddened with many a wound; but he himself calm and collected.

“Ha! loiterers!” he exclaimed, with an unimpassioned, but tremendous oath. “Is this a time for rest? Follow me, as ye love honour and fear the Provo-Marshal.” I dashed forward, and found myself among some fifty troopers, that the General had collected along the field. Robinson the player rode beside me.

“Great actor that!” he exclaimed, pointing

to Goring as we galloped along. "Splendid he'd be as Joan of Arc in petticoats.* By Jove! if ever I get home, I'll astonish my old father with that look and attitude of his."

Almost without a blow, we cleared our way through the scattered masses of the enemy, and gradually increased our little force as we bore down upon the point where Goring's quick eye had observed the King's standard sorely beset. The royal guards stood bravely to their post, but the Roundhead artillery had just begun to play upon them, and a strong body of rebel horse was hovering near to dash in upon the gaps the iron shot should make. We were halted for a minute or two to breathe our horses, and heard Goring's clear, piercing voice, mingling brave words of cheer with ruffian blasphemies.

"Now, sons of England," he exclaimed, "charge home with me this once, and dash like d—— on those crop-eared knaves."

* At this time no women were permitted on the stage; their parts were played by Robinson, Mohun, and others. Goring was of a rather delicate figure.

He stooped to his charger's mane, bounded across the artillery's line of fire, and plunged into the opposite mass of Roundhead horse. As he did, so did we all, as if one man, and found ourselves hand-to-hand with Hazlerigg's own troopers, in as fierce a *mêlée* as ever hand and heart gave strength to. Though taken by surprise, they fought furiously; gradually our dense formations struggled into wider space, and separated into a hundred different and personal encounters. Just then my good steed fell, crushing my right leg under him, and Blount was in a moment by my side. Before he could disengage me, I heard a cry of agony from poor Robinson; his right hand had just been severed from his wrist, and he held up his maimed arm to a gigantic trooper, with a shrill prayer for quarter; but that trooper was the stern Harrison;

"Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord negligently;" he exclaimed, as he clove the poor player's skull in two.*

* History takes note of this episode, in the very words of our Cavalier.

Many such scenes were enacting round me—but through individual acts of valour, terror and despair, the spirit of conquest ruled for our side, and resulted in the Roundheads giving way; then Goring's trumpet sounded the recall, and such of us as were able, obeyed and retired within our lines. Goring did not give time to observe the fearful loss we had sustained; with one word of commendation, he led us on again, horse and foot (for half of us had been unhorsed) round the hill side, and so charged the artillery. We were too few to capture it, but we made them retire from their guns, and probably thus saved the day.

I know not what was doing elsewhere, but at length we were left unassailed by the enemy, and so rested on our arms, man and horse alike incapable of further offensive movements. I then had time to cast my eyes about me. Everywhere I beheld groups of dying men who had been withdrawn, or withdrawn themselves, out of the strife with which they were done for ever. Surgeons and their men, with bared arms and bloody shirts, were attending upon

some ; ministers of religion were bending over others, exercising their healing office upon the souls of the departing.

I drew near to one of the latter groups ; a noble form, all sheathed, in armour, lay resting on a pile of heather ; the face alone was bare and upturned to the sky, and all seemed still with him, except gushes of blood that bubbled up from the cuirass at every pulse-beat. So lay the beloved of many, the admired of all—the gallant good Carnarvon. And kneeling by his side, his white hair waving in the breeze, knelt Jeremy Taylor, the Divine, pouring forth such heavenly and consoling prayer as brightened up the countenance of the dying man with thoughts that conquered agony.

As we stood round our happy comrade, Lord Jermyn, the Queen's favourite, rode up to him and hastily dismounted.

“ Ah, my dear Lord,” he exclaimed, “ this is sad work ; but we must get you round, we never could afford to lose such an ornament to court and camp.” The courtier suddenly ceased, for he saw that the Angel of Death was already

there, and even he was awed in his solemn presence; he was kind-hearted too, in his own way, and he bent over his friend and whispered softly.

“ You have deserved well of the King, have you no wish or prayer that I can deliver for you ? ”

The dying man, without moving his eyes from a bright sunset spot among the clouds where they were fixed, replied faintly and firmly “ No—I have now no prayer but for the King of kings ! ” And with these grand words he died.

I remained silently there beside him for some time, and then rose sadly and slowly to seek among the wounded or perhaps the slain, for my faithful follower, Bryan.

The battle was now over; the troops on either side were retiring, and the trumpets on either side were sounding victory. All fighting men had withdrawn from the sanguinary and bootless field, and there remained only some weary friends to seek—and some savage suttlers—women to spoil—the dead.

Then were found Falkland and Sunderland, and they were laid beside their friend as I have described; then too was found many a slain father by his son, a brother by his brother, with heart-breaking grief that never found a voice, except in the humble homes made desolate. And cries of pain and half-suppressed moans of stout men in their agony, rose up from the blood-moistened grass all round me, far and near. And horses uttered hideous screams as they struggled to stand on broken limbs or gasped for breath through torn lungs.

As the shades of evening darkened down, the wrecks of warlike implements, as well as of those who lately wielded them, assumed an appearance of more mysterious horror. The full round harvest-moon glimmered on many a battered breast-plate, and cloven helmet and broken sword,—redly too, it shone reflected on many a pool of blood, and made dark shadows of the distorted or shapeless forms that were lately men.

And thus is glory won! And thus, after 1600 years of Christian grace, do Christians

decide controversies concerning the common weal of their perishable bodies and immortal souls !

I leaned upon a broken gun-carriage, lost in contemplation of the scene before me, and still as one of the surrounding dead. I envied them : the meanest trooper there looked sublime and happy in repose, while the few forms that moved along the woeful field, seemed condemned to life, haunting this penal world wearily. One of these forms was now approaching, slowly and stealthily ; a mist had risen from the dewy field, and rendered all shapes doubtful, and undefined, and ghost-like. As the figure drew near, however, I could hear its breath drawn hard as if through clenched teeth, and as it turned towards the light, I could see the glitter of the long knife or skene used by the camp followers.

My heart beat quick in spite of me, as this ill-omened figure glided on. Now stooping over one body and cutting from it some article that seemed of value, and now rolling aside another unconscious corpse in order to rifle it

the more conveniently. I could by this time see that this creature was a woman—one of those lost ones who haunted every camp, corrupting the living and spoiling the dead bodies of the soldiery: it was also asserted, and I fear too truly, that their murderous-looking knives prevented many a wounded man's accusation. Horrid stories of such massacres rose up in my memory, as I pursued the hyæna-like woman with fascinated eyes. She moved on rapidly, and just before I lost sight of her, my attention was attracted to another form of very different appearance.

A mounted trooper seemed to start from the ground, so silently had he approached me; his figure looked gigantic, relieved against the lighted sky and dilated by the mist. Long fasting and the reaction of excitement had made me absolutely nervous, as I watched the horseman advance: that desponding look, that drooping form—could it be Prince Rupert? or was it the spirit of that 'Son of Blood,' as our enemies called him, haunting the scenes of carnage that he was supposed to love? All the wild

weird tales of apparitions seemed to me quite credible at such a time and place, and half in exorcism—endeavouring to break the spell that was gathering round me—I pronounced his name.

Flesh and blood it was, no doubt; for at once the right-hand grasped the sword that had been hanging idly at the wrist, and the erewhile sad countenance lighted up into that calm fierceness which none but that of Rupert ever wore. A few words served to explain who I was, and my position there; I heard in return, that the Prince had been reconnoitering the enemy whom he had followed to their bivouac alone.

“I shall have them to-morrow,” he muttered;—“ay, all to myself, without the babble or impertinence of a single scribe or courtier to spoil my work.—Well!—enough for this night I confess to you, Hastings, that I feel grave; those dead men have preached a solemn homily to me as I have been riding back alone. Surely this mysterious air seems full of the spirits that we have disembodied since the sun rose on them

in life and health.—And hark ! by Heavens that scream thrills to my very marrow—let's on."

So saying the impetuous Prince rode off at speed in the direction that the woman had just taken. I followed, and in a few minutes I found Rupert dismounted and in raging wrath ; holding the woman at arms' length, whilst he wrathfully blew his well-known bugle call, that screamed wildly through the stillness, and echoed far away.

"Look there, Hastings," he cried, "how this she-fiend has served an honest soldier !"

I looked, and saw Bryan, ghastly pale and crushed, with the handle of the accursed knife sticking in his shoulder ; the blade had pierced his flesh, and pinned him to the ground beneath. I could scarcely withhold my own angry hand from the woman, who was shrieking out horrible imprecations on the Prince, on herself, and all the world.

"That idle, scoundrel, Provost-Marshal," exclaimed the Prince, between his teeth ; "I told him a thousand times to look after these

she-devils; and by heaven, if he is not here now, I'll hang him to the first tree whenever I can catch him."

But the Provost-Marshal *was* there; running at top speed to his stern master's well-known call, followed by half-a-dozen functionaries, well furnished with cords; each man also having a short sword by his side.

"Look there," cried the Prince, "if that lad dies, thou shalt answer for his death; for I lay it at thy door that our camp is not long since weeded of these hell-cats. Now hang me up this one, out of hand—at once—here—on this spot;" and he flung her from him. The Marshal's men attempted to seize the woman, but practised as they were, they found it no easy matter. She fought with savage fury and despair, uttering loud cries, "for mercy and a long day."

I had thrown myself down by Bryan's^s side: his fidelity, and courage, and self-devotion, had made him very dear to me, and since my poor brother's death, he had unconsciously crept closer into my affections. Though far spent,

he knew me at once, and smiled gratefully for my care.

“Yes, draw it out quickly;” he murmured: “it is only in the flesh, for she missed her blow with fright when she heard the horse-men coming. It’s nothing worth mentioning—the pain—but, oh, to think that a woman, and an Irishwoman too—could murder a poor wounded fellow-countryman, and shed the blood of an O’Brian!”

As he spoke, the wretched woman burst with supernatural strength from the hands of the executioners, flung herself upon her knees, by his side, and gazed with wild earnestness into his half-closed eyes.

“Mother Mary! Mother Mary!” she shrieked out, in heart-broken tones, “what have I done—what have I done—to murder my own child! Oh, what have I *not* done! but it’s all paid back to me, if I had made the angels fall, in this one minnit. Stand off,” she screamed to the men who were again approaching her, “and for your

soul's sake listen to what I have to say—then do your worst, and sure hell 'ill be a rest to me.”

The men, already awed by her despair, held back at a sign from the Prince ; and the woman set up a long loud cry for forgiveness that seemed to pierce through Bryan's brain, for he covered his eyes with his unwounded arm and shuddered deeply.

“ Oh, bid her unsay that word,” murmured the poor fellow,—“ bid her not say that she's my mother ; but save her life for my sake.”

“ Too thrue, too thrue, I am your mother ;” sobbed out the miserable wretch ; “ too thrue, you sucked your first milk from this distracted breast. Oh, it was a fair one thin, my curses on it, and on every one but him that turned its warm blood to fire in my heart. Oh ! that poor heart is brakin' now—but I must, must spake. O darlin' of my soul ! when the Sas-senach sogers burnt down the Castle Mohir, the night that you was born and your mother died, didn't I hide you in my bosom from fire, and the bullets, and the storm ; and foster you

my best, till the sassenach Rufus deluded me, and led me away for one short hour, and I lost you? And didn't I thin roam the world thro' in search of you, till I heard you was dhrowned at say;—and have'nt I striven to revenge you and myself ever since upon the murtherin Sassenach. (O! little many a swaggering soger knew when he was coortin' me, that my breath was his poison and my pillow his death,)—and now, to find you here, afther all I done to comfort and revenge you—to find you here bleeding under my own stroke!”

Bryan extended his feeble hand. “Then you are not my mother, my poor friend,” he said, in a tremulous and gratified voice.

“Your *own* mother!” exclaimed the woman, “is it to be the Queen of Connaught and Turloghmore? No, no, my heart jewel, but I was your fosterer: and, I bless the Queen of Heaven now and evermore, amen, that I was let live to have my proud heart broken; for I am saved, I believe—ah—sure I'm saved.”

And worn out with emotion and long habits of debauchery, she sank upon the ground sense-

less, and a stream of blood trickled from her pale lips.

During all this scene the Prince had been leaning on his horse's neck, regarding it with grave and deep interest: he now leaped into the saddle and spoke quickly—

“Provost Marshal, forward; leave that carrion to the kites, and carry this wounded man carefully, as if he was my brother, to the town, and let him be as well looked to. Hastings, I cannot spare you: I hear the enemy astir. Get what men you can together, for in another hour we must march.”

CHAPTER X.

Which, when the pensive Ladie saw from farre,
Great woe and sorrow did her soul assay,
As weening that the sad end of the warre,
And 'gan to highest God entirely pray.

SPENSER'S "FAERIE QUEENE."

ON my return towards the town, I met Blount with half a score of my dismounted troopers; they had been searching for me all over the field in vain, and were now bending their steps in the direction whence they had heard Prince Rupert's bugle. In one respect, they had prospered by their vigilance; for, being first in the field, they had got hold of several good horses, which we wanted sadly. Above all, they had found poor Satan, who

it appeared had been only stunned in the encounter, and was now looking as animated as ever, though seamed with many a scar.

As soon as I had seen Bryan well cared for, and been assured that his wounds were not dangerous, I left him to his rest, and mounted to my lodgings. There I found Hotspur, looking the very picture of contentment. He had flung one huge boot to one end of the room, the other on the bed; his doublet was loose, and he could scarcely keep his other garments together as he sprang up to welcome me. He had a large flagon of wine by his side, his pipe was in his mouth, and he took deep and long inspirations of the fragrant weed between every sentence that he uttered, when the first hasty and warm greeting was well over. I seized the flagon with eagerness—and how delicious was that cool, sparkling wine to my parched throat, as wave after wave went gurgling down! Blount's cautious care had provided food enough in the field, but liquor was less portable, and I had tasted none since morning. What a new life it gave, and seemed to bathe the very soul

as well as body. Vigour and hope sprang up anew; care and anxiety were fairly drowned—blotted out from my brain—banished.

“Let’s make the most of this quiet hour,” drawled out Hotspur, luxuriously stretching himself along the wooden bench. “Beard of my fathers! what strange mortals are we! To think that *I* am lauding quiet as a blessing! There, fill your pipe, and tell us what the ‘mad Prince’ is up to now. His quartermaster, Hussey, has been round to every billet and stable, to reckon how many men and horses are fit for the next slaughter—battle I mean. By the Rood for once, I have had almost enough of it; and I care not who thou tellest it to, for no one will believe it. And what an unappeaseable appetite for fight hast thou, my cousin. After hammering on Roundhead pots and haquetins like so many anvils all the day, thou comest not home like an honest workman in the evening; but prowlest about the field of battle like some beauty in a deserted banquet-room, musing, I presume, upon your conquests. And here’s my poor old fellow-wayfarer, the

Chaplain, has been waiting to catch a glimpse of thee during the last four-and-twenty hours; and now he's gone to seek thee among the wounded on that infernally ill-fought field of ours. Can'st tell me, by the bye, who was the conqueror?"

"Why, the enemy are in retreat," said I.

"Ay," Hotspur returned, "that is to say they have resumed their march, and we're not able to prevent them. I'll be bound for it, however, our mad Prince intends to indulge himself in a little skirmishing with them before they part. He's a fine lion-hearted fellow, that Rupert (was that a noise upon the stair?)—but if he gets me into the saddle this night again, I'm a—"

"Peer of the realm," interrupted the personage in question, as he entered the room. "Why, Hotspur, have I caught *thee* breeding a mutinous spirit of tranquillity? On with thy boots, man, and don thine armour; Harry Hastings of no where this day, and Lord Loughborough of Newbury, to-morrow. Wouldst

thou have me ashamed of the only title our royal uncle has yet bestowed at my request."

So saying, the indefatigable Prince took a deep swill of the oft-replenished flagon, and by the time he had finished his draught and laid down the cup, Hotspur was an altered man. He had started to his feet on the first entrance of his Highness, and his fingers had been convulsively busy with his loops and points. By this time he was in full attire, and he now exclaimed, as he took down his well-tried sword from the mantel-piece: "May the bright honour of Plantagenet perish in my blood, if ever I have failed or shall fail thee, Prince, however my foolish tongue may wag; and there's my glove upon that oath."

"Enough," said the Prince, "I never doubted thee. I find the Roundheads are retiring; George Lisle and his musketeers are already on the move towards the narrow road that they must pass. We can muster about five hundred horse of all sorts, and in an hour we shall mount: till then we rest."

So saying, he threw himself, at full length, upon a wooden bench, his head sank upon his breast, and he was profoundly asleep almost as soon as he ceased to speak.

I will not weary my reader with any more fighting for the present. Enough to say we pursued Essex hotly, punished his rear-guard severely, and suffered not a little ourselves. Before noon, we had rejoined the main army of the King now on its return to Oxford. There, at length, I found the good chaplain, who exhibited more emotion on seeing me, than I thought his calmed old age was capable of. Nor was this interview, though so long deferred, without deep interest to me: that good old man had seen almost the last of my brother; he had announced his untimely death to that brother's faithless mistress; he had witnessed how Zillah looked when she beheld the destruction of our home.

Deeply moved, as he was at first, when all these recollections came crowding on his memory, the old man's voice soon rose into the clear and mellow tones in which he had read,

and preached, and prayed so long, that they had become quite natural to him. He described to me all that he had seen, and much that he had felt, with almost scriptural terseness and simplicity; and he concluded by informing me, that he had "sought me far and near without ceasing, for that Phoebe was wounded in spirit, and sick unto death, refusing to be comforted until she had obtained my pardon and forgiveness."

But this was not the only purport of his mission. He brought some considerable sums of money, voluntary gifts they might be called, from my poor harassed people, and some information that was far more valuable. The substance of his story was as follows: he began by giving an account of the family of the castle.

The night that Hugo had last seen them, they had retired to rest, expecting to be released, and to depart upon the morrow;—"but in the midst of the night, at the twelfth hour, there came officers with a great company of spearmen, and bid them gird themselves up, and prepare straightway to set forth upon their journey; and when

they would not, through fear, there came in upon them a mishapen dwarf, scarce two cubits high, who had a token for the Lady Zillah that she should depart; whereupon they departed, and in fine reached the castle in safety.

“And it was well; for in the morning there came an order to the Tower from certain avaricious men of the committee, that Sir Janus should be stayed until he should pay a great fine; but, behold, he was already fled. Then came an order that Sir Janus should furnish cattle, of which he had great store, and likewise horses fit for war, of which he had very many; and that they should be given up to those who called themselves ‘the chosen of Israel.’ But Sir Janus, wise in his generation, had sent away all that were good for use or pleasant to the eye, into the wilderness, even the free country; and from the highway and commons he had bought and collected all the beasts, both horses and horned cattle, that were of little worth; and the former he had carefully tended in his stables with much clothing, and with the

latter he filled his cowsheds and his pastures. And when the commissioners were come to receive the required creatures, lo ! there were only weak colts and aged horses, and likewise of cattle only such as typified of old the seven famine years to Egypt. And the commissioners were very wroth, and they took not above half a score of the vile horses, and twice so many murrain cattle, whereof many of the soldiers partaking, became sick and died.*

“ Likewise the Lady Demiroy had been compelled to furnish a large store of fine linen and much cloth, in the preparation whereof she and her handmaidens had been busied many years ; and the chiefs of the people took for themselves the fine linen ; and of the broad-cloth garments were made for the lower parts of their followers.

“ While things stood thus at the Castle, the forces of the people beleaguered Beaumanoir, and the Chaplain had been commanded and

* A similar transaction was recorded in the journals of the time, as having taken place at Stoke Hall, near Newark.

compelled to flee thence to the refuge of the Castle. And he obtained access there, being neither hindered nor receiving welcome ; for Sir Janus had shut him up in his own chamber, and her Ladyship was busied with her hand-maidens in laying out flax and woof anew for the spinning, even as a spider endeavoureth to renew her broken webs. But the young ladies were in the library as of old, and looking out with pale faces on the beleaguered mansion in the vale below, that had been of old so friendly and so dear to their childhood. And the elder maiden received the Chaplain kindly, and led him to her sister, who sat apart, buried in deep sorrow, and with much shamefacedness. And when he blessed her, she fell upon her knees, and hiding her fair face she told him all the sorrow, and, it may be, the sin of her young heart. And he strove to comfort her, but she would not ; and as he spoke, lo ! a loud discharge of artillery shook all the windows, and made the poor penitent start to her feet, and she gazed with terrific eyes on the havoc that had been begun, and on the battle. And the

fire of muskets, and of great guns came fast from the battlements of the old house in reply to them that besieged, but of the defenders none were visible save one, for they covered themselves behind the walls. But that one, (whom they knew to be Sir Hugo, from his tall white plume,) was always to be seen, as he moved about among his followers. Then the maiden whom he had loved, hid her face once more and sobbed aloud.

“ ‘Father,’ she said to her old chaplain; ‘can it be that we have two souls within our one small heart? I have told thee, that I love another—Ah! too dearly! and yet, methinks, the love I bear that doomed and gallant youth is stronger still, though greatly differing. Oh! I would give a thousand years of life for one brief moment—to throw myself on his breast and protect him with my own from the death that is hovering round him. If he could but hear me, I would say, and that most truly, all that the most loving heart could ever long to hear. And then—I know too, too well—his life would become dearer to him, and he would

guard it for my sake and for that of happiness to come. Alas ! never more—never more shall I hear his voice ; never again shall I have a chance of ennobling my vile nature by communing with his noble spirit.’

“And with many such sorrowful words she spake, and I could not comfort her ; but my tears, the dew of my heart’s pity, fell fast from these aged eyes. Then suddenly, the artillery roared louder, and we could hear a mighty crash, and then a torrent of iron-clad men pressed on, yea, and into, the old house ; and the loud noise ceased, and only obscure and muffled sounds reached our ears, as the fight raged within, even to the death. Then a thick smoke arose, and flames burst forth, and lo ! all was utterly silent — even as the silence of the grave.

“ ‘ He is lost ! he is lost ! ’ exclaimed the hapless maiden at my knee. ‘ Well I know that he is lost ! never would his high and gallant spirit survive the pollution of his father’s home. He is lost ! and has not left his match in all this base, dark world behind him.’

“After the space of an hour, it might be, the Lady Zillah rose hastily from her knees, for she had been rapt in prayer, even since the beginning of the strife. Yea, she arose and flung open the casement, and the young Irish lad leaped in from the branches, by the help of which he had clomb the wall. He looked like the spirit of flame and ruin; scorched, bruised and blood-stained, with direful tidings of that noble youth, which every eye could read upon his pale face and darkened brow.

“‘I have but a moment,’ said he, ‘to do my dead master’s bidding. To you Lady,’ he said to my poor pupil, who had shrank horror-stricken into the window’s deep recess—‘to you Lady, Sir Hugo sent his last words. I need not speak them, even if I dared. To you, Reverend Sir, I bequeath the care of his remains, and of these monies, which he received yesterday for my Lord. I would not be cumbered with them; I have, maybe, small chance of reaching Oxford in safety. Lady—’ he continued, turning to Zillah with deep reverence, ‘I return this night, if I survive it, to my

Lord; may I have charge of any message to console him for this sad day?’

“Just then steps were heard along the gallery; he sprang to the window, but paused a little space for her reply. She motioned him away as the door opened, and the brave lad was gone.”

The old man proceeded to say that his young pupil was long sick, almost to death; refusing to be comforted, and raving oftentimes of her lost ‘brother.’ That she had forsworn life and all that it could bring, and had implored her old chaplain to permit her to take the veil, promising that she would still be a true churchwoman in all else. But he forbid her to think of such a living suicide; he told her that the only true retirement was to be found in her own heart, and the only true discipline was that of a chastened spirit. And her sister likewise strove to soothe and counsel her with words that were passing sweet; and by that bed of sorrow, the Puritan sister and the old Churchman had found a sympathy and

a bond of feeling that they had never known before.

After two days, the Roundhead forces, except a small garrison, had left Beaumanoir, and the old man had ventured to leave his pupil and go thither in search of Hugo's remains, in the hope of performing the Church rites over them and his fellow-sufferers. He had obtained easy admission to the house; some of the rebels had reviled, and others had pity on his sorrow and his grey hairs. But none could tell him where to find those whom he sought; the fire was supposed to have destroyed the defenders, with that which they had so well-defended. He had then wandered to his favourite haunt in my father's lifetime, where the ancient records of our house were kept. He knocked at the door, and a deep voice, that he knew well, inquired who was there. He gave his name, and heard a hasty stride, and the door bolted from within. He heard that voice no more — but it was the voice of Hezekiah Doom.

His pupil regained strength slowly; at last,

her frame, though not her mind, recovered from its shock. She spoke constantly of me, declaring that if she could once hear that I had pardoned her, she would feel happy. At length, her aged friend set out, and after long and painful travel, he had thus met with me.

CHAPTER XI.

Tell fortune of her blindness ;
Tell nature of decay ;
Tell friendship of unkindness ;
Tell justice of delay.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

THE summer campaign was now over, and both armies were contented to retire for rest and repair. Oxford was become to me more distasteful than ever, and I resolved to leave it, since I could do so without reproach. My cousin Hastings, now Lord Loughborough, having accomplished his business, was urgent to depart for his garrisoned Castle of Ashby de la Zouch: the old chaplain too, was very anxious to return to his pupil, so I determined to take the escort of my cousin for him and for myself

as far as Ashby, and then to proceed, if possible, to visit my ruined home. Bryan was still unable to be moved, but he was in high spirits, for the Prince had appointed him cornet and standard-bearer in his highness's own regiment. I furnished him with all suitable appointments, and left to his care and use my good steed Satan, being as unfit for work at present as the young cornet.

It was with a light heart, that having made these arrangements, I prepared to depart. The King granted me an audience to take leave, at which the Queen and Prince Rupert were present. His Majesty was very gracious, the more so when he found that my only request was in favour of Bryan—for his preferment if he should so deserve.

“Ah,” said her Majesty who valued herself on knowing everything. “Is not he de young Irish king, dat my Lord Digby speaks of? Jermyn saith it is but base blood after all.”

“Whatever it be, madam,” said the Prince, who always felt bound to take a soldier's part against a courtier, “whatever it be, he has

shed more of it for your Majesties, than little Jermyn's whole carcase ever contained in his best of times."

"Ah, me, yes," replied her Majesty; "I did hear that he was hang very often; but dese Irish are used to dat."

Prince Rupert had meant well; yet I doubt however whether Bryan will owe much promotion to his support on this occasion. The King, to my great relief, interrupted his Highness's further rejoinder, and amiably endeavoured to smooth the argument.

"We claim to have some Irish blood in our own veins," said he, smiling, "so we must speak of it respectfully; and you need not fear, my Lord Hastings, that I shall take good care of my young kinsman. You will soon return, I trust, to our court, and be yourself my witness in this matter. But here comes Ned Hyde with his budget of daily miseries, and I will detain you no longer from your journey."

With these words, his Majesty turned to his melancholy minister, and immediately afterwards I took my leave. Prince Rupert remained

in a state of high argument with the Queen concerning the late siege of Gloucester.

Once more upon the open road ; once more free from service and responsibilities, my heart bounded with boyish buoyancy. The sun shone radiantly ; the fresh breezes from the hills blew merrily round me ; every bird seemed to lavish its sweet music, every hedge seemed to breathe sweet perfume. For a while, life's path looked bright before me, but suddenly the Past revived and flung its shadow far over every gleam of happiness : hope seemed to recede beyond the bounds of earth, and to brighten only for another world.

The two persons between whom I rode might have been impersonations of these different moods. Hotspur, as I shall still call him, was actually glowing with all the warmest hues and hopes of life ; the old chaplain's face and form were almost monumental in their whiteness and their deep repose. The young Cavalier was the emblem of exulting youth ; his companion, that of calm, declining age : my mortal nature envied the one, my spiritual

nature envied the other. I said so to the younger, who heaved a deep sigh, and exclaimed,

“ Stick to the old one, then, my dear kinsman, for I’m the most miserable man on earth. Read that,” he continued, presenting me with a rosy-scented little note ; “ you may spell it over, if you like, for you never saw the hand-writing before. Just as I was mounting I received it, in reply to a world of serenades, and love-tokens, and whispered compliments, not to mention a dozen of gallons or so of sack consumed in drinking to her health. That Oxford is a ruinous place, doubtless, to one’s heart ; what between beauty and wine, and squabbles and jealousies, one’s mind is always in a diseased state, ready to receive every tender infection. Then those cloisters are very dangerous : I know nothing that makes me nervous like the faint rustle of a woman’s gown, as she moves along those shadowy places, or startles the eye in some soft moonlight, where they glance by like spirits—yea, as if they were the beatified and greatly changed ghosts of the old women—dons I mean—who, of yore, frequented those places in

caps and gowns of a different cut. Ah! it will be pleasant, after all, to get back to one's beleaguered old castle, where one is safe from every thing worse than musket balls and honest steel. Yet, Hastings, Kate Killigrew is wondrous fair."

I turned to the chaplain, and inquired if *he* regretted our departure: "Truly, Sir," he replied, "I have nearly lost that youthful habit of regretting. Nevertheless, I did much affect that monastic life, save that it is somewhat papistical, and yet not altogether, or by any means ascetic. But that must surely be a blessed place—shining like a light upon a hill—that All Souls—which Master Jeremy Taylor, doth inhabit and enlighten by his sound and saving doctrine."

"Bad place, bad place, depend upon it Reverend Sir," interrupted Hotspur: "except Merton College, where our gracious Queen herself resides, I know none worse. Some of the handsomest ladies in England are lodged there, and the ale besides is as strong as—ah, my head aches at the thoughts on't."

Between these two incongruous companions, I rode on contentedly until we reach Banbury, where we halted for the night. Throughout the entire road we were obliged to follow from one royal garrison to another, rather than to take direct roads, which were generally occupied by the enemy. When at length we reached Ashby-de-la-Zouch, we were most hospitably entertained there by my kinsman. Here, with a scant garrison, he had kept all the forces of the Roundheads at bay, since the beginning of the wars; ever vigilant to defend himself, yet ever ready and forward to assist his comrades, in the surrounding, but distant, garrisons.

When at length we prepared to depart, he accompanied us as far as the boundary of his own county; and insisted on furnishing us with an escort of twelve troopers as far as Belvoir Castle, whither I was now bound. When there, I expected to learn the true state of Lincolnshire, and if I found it impossible to travel otherwise to my home, I intended to

apply for a pass from the rebel general, or even to visit it in disguise if necessary.

It was towards the close of a soft and mellow October day, that we came in sight of the fine old castle of Belvoir, seated proudly in its magnificent position, high over its surrounding woods and ruined Priory. To this my old friend looked forward with an antiquarian's zealous interest, while my attention was wholly occupied in scrutinizing the roads by which we were to reach it; for the last light was already fading, and I, and all my party were strangers in that country.

Night closed in suddenly with a heavy fog, and we groped our way uncertainly, until we were hailed by a countryman, who demanded who and whence we were. One of Loughborough's troopers answered roughly, and desired the fellow to show the way: but, before he had done speaking the countryman was gone. We could not attempt to follow him, the darkness had become so great that we were fain to alight and feel our way on foot. At length we were saluted by another voice,

which inquired whether we were the Cavaliers that had lost our way to Belvoir.

“If ye be,” he said, “ye’ve taken the wrong road and got your backs to it; but I’ll lead ye there for a silver shilling, seeing ye’re so sore beset.”

I ordered him to mount behind Blount, who explained to the guide, in his own pithy manner, that the slightest mistake would be instantly fatal to him, the said guide. We now changed our direction slightly, as we thought, under the orders of Blount’s companion.

At length he called a halt, and declared that unless dismounted, he could not find the track over the common on to which we had strayed before he joined us. Blount, accordingly, was reluctantly compelled to let him down, fastening at the same time a stout cord round his neck, in order—as he told him, to serve for a clue or a halter, as the case might require. We then began to move again, and soon thought we heard confused noises, which our guide assured us was the wrangling or carousing of the Belvoir Cavaliers. But at the same time he stopped

to pause and listen, and then gave such a tug at his leading string that Blount checked it back with all his force, in hopes of hanging him. But the cord came home so unexpectedly, that Blount had almost tumbled from his horse; his prisoner had cut the cord. In another moment, Blount's ready pistol rang after the fugitive, and was almost immediately answered by a discharge of musketry. I gave orders to charge forward—but one-half of our horses recoiled, and the others fell, against a stone wall, from behind which the ambuscade had poured their fire. We were all well accustomed to emergency, and were soon charging in the opposite direction, but there we were again met by high gates, which had been closed behind us.

All this time a succession of volleys rolled in upon us, which—notwithstanding the darkness, began to tell fatally. I then called out to my

men to dismount, to cease swearing and to sell their lives as dearly as they could. About half a dozen of us made a rush at the wall whence the fire came, bounded over it and cut down a musketeer probably to every man. We were soon overpowered, however, by pikes and clubbed muskets which these fellows used like flails; one of them deprived me of all sense.

When I came to myself, I was in a large waggon, lying bound upon a heap of damp straw. Blount and one of the troopers were beside me there. All the rest, with one exception, had died, as I guessed, too truly, where they fell. When we had begun to move under the direction of our unknown guide, feeling some misgivings, I had requested the old chaplain to keep some hundred yards behind us and to be guided only by the sound of our footsteps. He had thus escaped, and been shut out from the ambushade into which we fell.

The day was now dawning; the reviving influence of sunshine, together with the exquisite pain that the jolting of the waggon caused to my wounds, recalled me to a dreamy consciousness. I hoped, rather than believed, that my good Blount was my companion, and I pronounced his name.

“Body o’ me!” exclaimed that faithful follower, “but I’m the happiest man in England at this blessed hour to hear you speak once more;” and at the same time, he pressed both his hands to that poor mangled frame he had evoked, whether to stifle his grinding pains, or to help himself to suppress emotion, I know not. “We’ve lost the day once more, my Lord,” he continued, “and surely the prayers of the poor must have been about your honour, or we’d have lost our lives too in that base farm yard. I wonder shall we ever win a battle?”

I inquired if he was badly wounded.

“I have got some bruises,” he answered :
“but those clodhoppers let blood enough too,
to keep the fever down ; and if it please God, I
may yet see the poor woman that owns me
after all !”

I had never heard of this personage before ;
I observed, therefore, as soon as I could get
sufficient breath, “So you have a wife,
then ?”

“Why, not exactly, my Lord, for the poor
woman died whilst I was away with your father,
at the Isle of Rhé. But when I was prisoner
there with a Frenchwoman — (a Protestant,
though she spoke French)—I got married to
her in a sort of manner, for it was service only
read in French gibberish. Well, *I* escaped, and
she did’ent, and I never knew rightly whether
I was married to her or not, poor thing, till
I heerd the other day that she had found her
way at last into Lincolnshire, and that my

old father had received her, and was keeping her for my sake. But I own to you I never felt I was a married man, till I got knocked over last night,* and lay dying, as I thought, without one to drop a tear for me, but my old father, and he wouldn't be guilty of such a weakness."

As this conversation proceeded, we had been moving along slowly by a broad and quiet stream, which I soon recognised as the Trent. Our only escort, that we could see, consisted of a couple of pikemen, who walked close behind the waggon; but I thought I could hear the tramp of troopers, both in front and rear. Suddenly there seemed to be some alarm given to our captors, for our two guards tossed their pikes into the waggon, and taking up their matchlocks, began to blow their match. At the same time, a body of horse galloped back to join their comrades in the rear. We could just hear the well-known shout of "For a King! for a King!" followed by the clash of arms and pistol shots. Our horses were lashed into a gallop, our musketeers leaped into the waggon,

and the rough jolting soon reduced me once more to a state of insensibility.

I afterwards learned that the attempt at our rescue, by a body of Newark horse, had failed; we had been carried into Nottingham Castle and given up to the charge of Colonel Hutchinson; or rather of his wife, for the Colonel was then absent.

* * * *

Thus far have I completed the task I set myself. A full month has elapsed since I began it; a month unmarked, except by the memory of the scenes I have recalled, and noted down each day, as if they had been re-enacted. During all this time I have received honourable, and even kind treatment; but I have seen no living creature, except the Caliban, my gaoler. On him I have tried all kindness, and even bribes in vain. He seems to take a professional sort of pleasure in making my confinement as irksome as possible. But one pleasant communication has he vouchsafed to make to me,

and that evidently by command of his superiors. As soon as Blount was able to travel, he had been released and exchanged with the Cavaliers of Newark for one of the Roundhead garrison of Nottingham. I was not permitted to see him, however, though a verbal message was allowed. That message contained merely an injunction to my faithful servant to return to his home as soon as possible, and to live peaceably, until better times should come.

* * * *

I am now unoccupied, and in the absence of all distraction, I feel disemployment pressing on me like a burden. I miss my work, as if it had been some kindly watchful, thoughtful friend; what was at first mere labour, had become an occupation, occupation became interest, and that interest a pleasure. A pleasure sadly diminished, however, as I look back upon what I have written; and what, being written, must so remain. When I attempt to improve a sentence, I find I must wholly alter it; if altered,

the connecting sentences require also reparation, and thus the whole fabric would fall to the ground.

So I put away my file of papers, and turn to other objects of interest, and such objects of distraction as I can discern through the three narrow and dim panes of glass that light my cell. A mass of heavy clouded sky is all that I can see, with now and then a happy bird careering by; there is a hand's breadth, too, of the old battlement visible, and on it the lichen has changed colour since the winter cold set in. Of my three flies that used to buz cheerfully on those three melancholy bits of glass, two are dead, and one can scarcely crawl; but as I follow his laborious movements, I seem to trace a letter—yes, surely, and another—written on the pane.

Miraculous power of communicating thought to thought!—so little acknowledged when we are free and surrounded by the thousand ties that make all human nature one—now I feel its force. He who last inhabited this cell is about to speak to me by those simple signs, scarcely

legible, except to the keenest watchfulness. Yes, there are letters, but they are so few, that I prolong the pleasure of my suspense, and husband the treasure of something new whereon to speculate. And now I gaze again, and scrutinize ; but, surely, my eyes are dim, and I have a strange wandering in my thoughts. I sit down to soothe myself, and then again strain my eyes to those faint letters.

Now I can read : “ *In the left corner, beneath the bed, a small square stone will——*” My sight fails me again, and at the same time the gaoler enters with my daily meal.

It was not my accustomed attendant, but a soldier almost as silent. Eagerly as I strove to obtain information from him, I could only learn my former warden had sickened of what was commonly called the gaol-plague, and died that morning ; and surely I, too, must have caught it : my eyes are yet more dim, and my brain reels—I shall hide away my writings, and—

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I have wakened, after a long time, as if from

death ; remembering dimly some pain, and many wild thoughts, with intervals of unconsciousness ; and sometimes visions of women, silent, watchful, and consoling, passed before me. Who could they be ? The very day felt lighter for their presence ; the sweet whispered words lingered soothingly upon the air, and before the magical touch of a cool, soft hand, my brain's wild fever well nigh vanished. And then I seemed to hear, (whether it was in fancy or sweet truth, for it sounded as if it had fallen on another's ear,) a grave, but gentle, voice, speaking mournfully ; " Poor youth ! poor youth ! Doubtless he hath known much sorrow ; and surely he appeareth too good for his evil calling."

But all this was and is a dream to me. All I know is, that I am now recovering from severe illness, and that I must have been tended.

As my thoughts and memory recover, those three panes of glass recur to me with all their interest. I draw myself painfully towards the window, and read once more : " In the left

corner beneath the bed a small square stone will move." That was all ; but it was enough to inspire me with speculations, and eager hopes for many an hour.

When my gaoler entered again, he was followed by a surgeon, in whom, to my great joy, I recognized my old friend, He-that-healeth." He read at a glance in my countenance that I was far recovered, and had recognized him.

He laid his finger on his lip, and said authoritatively : "Speak not, else shalt thou be left solitary. I will tell thee some few words, and perhaps to-morrow thou mayest speak some for thine own self. Thou hast been ill—near at death's door ; now thou art spared, to lead, I trust, a more profitable life."

So saying, he left me, but returned on the following day, when I gleaned from him that I had been dangerously ill for a fortnight ; that Mrs. Hutchinson, the Governor's wife, had been very anxious about me, and had even visited me more than once. That an unsuccessful

attack had been made by the Cavaliers of Ashby, it was supposed in order to rescue me, when the chief of the party having been sorely wounded, they had retired. That the Governor was very anxious to have me exchanged or removed, but that some secret and strong influence in London had prevailed against me. Finally, that he himself had had a quarrel with Harrison, who commanded his former regiment, and had applied for leave to retire to his own country, Scotland ; but that Colonel Hutchinson, a mild, good man, had prevailed upon him to give his services to the garrison at Nottingham. "And now, farewell," he concluded. "I shall not be pairmitted to visit ye again, for ye require mine aid nae mair, and the commands of the Governor are vera strict. So far ye weel."

No sooner had the door closed, than I essayed to prosecute my great discovery. Exerting all my feeble strength, I removed the bed a foot from where it had rested, and there I found the small stone specified in the writing

on the glass. With trembling eagerness, I removed it, but found nothing except a damp earthen flooring. Feeling about the place, however, my fingers encountered something sharp; it was a small fragment of glass, which I flung away in disgust and disappointment. Having satisfied myself that there was no aperture beneath the stone, I replaced it and the bed as carefully as possible, and then flung myself down to rest, and ponder on what the meaning of all this might be. Suddenly I rose, and sought about for the piece of glass, wiped it clean, and then held it to the light; it spoke at once, in letters clear, distinct, and well-formed. The writing ran thus :

“The hearthstone will be easily removed; beneath it is a passage, wrought by my weary hands in the space of eighteen months. It will lead to the old disused chapel of the castle, and under the broken window on the left there is a tombstone, which opens into Mortimer’s Hole. Being struck with sore sickness after I had made all things ready to escape, I have

written these words, in hope that, if I die,
some other prisoner may profit by my labours.
Pray for the soul of Ambrose Gifford. June 16,
1637."

CHAPTER XII.

The heaven under which I live is fair,
The fertile soil will a full harvest bear ;
Thine, thine is all the barrenness, if thou
Should'st but sit still and pine, when thou should'st
plough.

When I but think how many a tedious year,
Our patient sovereign did attend
His long misfortunes' patient end.

COWLEY.

Near Lausanne, Oct., 1649.

* * * *

MANY a long day has passed since last I saw this manuscript. The pages are stained and torn, and the ink is faded. Innumerable were the chances against its ever having seen the light ; yet its old leaves are open to me once more, and claim their finishing. Far different are the scenes and circumstances amid which I resume my pen from those with which I was surrounded when last I laid it down ; far different the mood and feelings in which I

wrote, as if I belonged to another family and race.

* * * *

I am living in a land of liberty. How could men be otherwise than free amid such god-like scenery? Those Alpine summits, raising their stainless and transparent snows to heaven, offer a fit theme for freedom. No slave can skulk, no tyrant trample there. The very winds that circle round them are pure and strong, redolent of noble thoughts and strenuous deeds. Hypocrisy or baseness could not breathe that air and live.

Heroes of Sempach and Morgarten, ye flung back a usurping protector from your sacred soil; but who would have dared to name to you the murder of a lawful King? Patriots of Schwitz and Unterwalden, no impious act of yours ever violated the great council of your nation! Reformers of Zurich and Geneva, your great labours were never consummated by cant, or defiled by blasphemous fanatics!*

* The Cavalier speaks here with all the bitterness of an exile and a defeated man, yet mildly, in comparison

Therefore is your uncontaminated land a fit refuge for the free—a fit asylum for those who have fought in vain against the Usurper and the Church-destroyer.

* * * *

I turn from thoughts and memories that inflame my soul, to the blessed scenes around me, that soothe and charm it into philosophic calm and Christian contentment. Nothing but a sense of wilful sin can poison the happiness that munificent nature sheds around us here :

of what his fellow-exiles, Ludlow and Denzil Holles, both Roundheads, wrote. However, we may presume, that even the Cavalier did not exaggerate, when we read the following extract, concerning the triumphant Puritans ; it is written by a great modern historian, whose sympathies, it is unnecessary to state, are altogether anti-Cavalier ; “ Major-Generals fleecing their districts ; soldiers revelling on the spoils of a ruined peasantry, upstarts enriched by the public plunder, taking possession of the hospitable firesides and hereditary trees of the old gentry ; boys smashing the painted windows of cathedrals, Fifth monarchy men shouting for King Jesus, Quakers riding naked through the market-place ; agitators lecturing from tubs on the fate of Agag, &c.”

—*Macaulay*

every sense is gratified, exalted, and refined ; the painter's eye and music's ear rest satisfied ; and even the poet's heart surrenders its ideal to the actual loveliness before him.

For, even as I write, both time and clime combine to render this beautiful region most beautiful. A balmy evening of a happy southern spring is approaching ; the golden sunshine is still pouring down upon the snowy mountains, and trickling through the pine-forest of the hills. Lausanne is lighted up by its last rays—all except yon sombre castle on the heights ; Vevay comes out from its rich vineyards, and then the day's broad light is lost among the woods of Clarens. But a lovelier light succeeds, tenderly transparent over the emerald fields round Chillon, but gorgeous in violet and purple, as it passes away into the valley of the Rhone. Right opposite to us, over romantic Meillerie, the hills rise dark and abruptly from the water's edge—deep-wooded glens and verdant promontories alternating below ; above, there is nothing but broad expanses of eternal snow, towering into icy pinnacles that

seem to pierce the sky. And sometimes the fascinated gaze will linger on the lake, in whose faithful bosom every beauty of her mountains lies reflected; and sometimes our eyes will wander eastward, on finding at every glance new interest arise, until lost in the recesses of the mountains over Martigny.

Full in the presence of these glorious scenes stands my humble cottage, ennobled not dwarfed by the surrounding majesty of Nature, man's natural domain. In my most vain-glorious and prosperous hour, I never felt so truly proud as when gazing on this wondrous scenery; and feeling that it was made for me, and such as me, by Him who made man at the first in His own glorious image.

Such thoughts as these are fostered by the comparative solitude in which I live. The sun seems to rise for me when I would begin the day; for me the rain comes, when wanted by my young and dusty vines; night closes softly over the world when it and I are weary. In social crowds man loses his own individuality, as he acquires some portion of that of others.

In seclusion he looks upon himself and others as seen afar off, in a more imposing form. '*L'isolement grandit tout,*' as they say in the language of this country.

My cottage and its surrounding fields are separated from the town of Lausanne by some undulating hills, that shut out from me the importunateness, but not the convenience of the crowded haunts of man. My vines and pastures slope southward to the lake, in beautiful and convenient inequalities. A miniature sea-shore, strewn with fine sand and gravel, sweeps round my little territory, receiving, not repelling the gentle waves that scarcely oppress a wild flower with their angriest spray.*

But the evening has now closed in over all

* This must have been on, or near the site now occupied by one of the most charming houses in the world—Denantou—the residence of Mr. Haldimand. The Cavalier is not responsible for omitting all description of this house, with its rich gardens, arbours, fountains, and unequalled pleasure grounds, thrown open to the public by their generous proprietor; but even my faint recollection of the surrounding scenery, makes me blush for the Exile's attempt at its description.

this, as under the genial influence of a blazing fire, I draw my chair to the table, and trim my lamp, and boldly attempt to resume my narrative.

CHAPTER XIII.

Whether first nature, or long want of rest,
Hath wrought my soul to this I cannot tell,
But horrors are not now displeasing to me.
I like this rocking of the battlements,
The lightning's glaring and the thunder's roar,
Give pleasure to my eye and music to my ear.

ONCE more, borne back by recollection and too faithful memory : I am young, hopeful, and enterprising, once more I imagine myself imprisoned in the Castle of Nottingham. The langour of long sickness has passed away, and my cell is grown quite cheerful in my eyes ; for expectation has shone into it, and the means of escape are open before me. * * *

It was with pleasant difficulty that I re-

strained my impatience for some days until my strength should be restored, and until I had accustomed myself, by such exercise as I could take in my narrow prison, to the long and perilous expedition that lay before me. At length the day arrived. I packed my closely-written manuscript into the smallest possible space, which still nearly filled one pocket of my doublet; often the bright fire tempted me to dispose of this incumbrance more easily, but the recollection of Cæsar enabled me to conquer that temptation. I hid away some remnants of my morning's meal, and prepared myself to set forth as soon as the early sun had set, and my gaoler had paid me his last visit for the evening.

The weather was wild and stormy, though there was strong moonlight, and so far my intention was favoured by circumstances. As the night drew near, the storm grew louder, shrieking and roaring about the old Castle till it echoed again and shook to its foundation. Thunder and lightning too, in all their winter force, now pealed and flashed, and the gaoler

seemed in greater hurry than usual to finish his evening's task, and escape to his companions.

No sooner had he withdrawn than I was on my knees, eagerly striving to raise the hearth-stone, my portal of escape. At length I succeeded, by means of a small piece of iron that had been left to stir the fire. As I anticipated, a very rugged, but practicable passage then discovered itself. Descending cautiously and holding my cresset lamp steadily, I could not but admire the patience of the poor prisoner who had made this passage ; he must have each day carried back with him so much of the earth and rubbish he had excavated as could be disposed of without notice in his fire-place, or elsewhere, until removed away by his goaler.

After a few yards I found my way open out into a sort of dry well ; and I found I could reach the bottom with my feet. On examining the walls carefully with my lamp, I found a large stone panel, which I soon ascertained moved upon a pivot. I then concluded that this was one of the old places of concealment, called

“priests’ holes,” although often applied to less pious purposes. I concluded that I was now close to the chapel; but, before I ventured to move the panel, I shaded my lamp and looked cautiously into the space beyond.

It was indeed the deserted chapel that I had read of; a lofty and elaborately ornamented apartment, with arched groins supported upon hideous faces carved in stone. It had been long disused and was now mouldering to decay, its sculptured tracery falling into ruin, and its windows almost deprived of their beautiful “papistic” painted glass. As the hurrying clouds rolled by, every now and then the moon shone brightly in, and sometimes a glare of lightning would fill the whole space with more vivid light than that of day.

One of those flashes now revealed to me a female figure, muffled in a large black cloak; she leaned with folded arms against a pillar, and seemed to be gazing on the war of the elements with stern pleasure. Sometimes she would walk pensively to and fro, and once or twice she looked upward to the roof, then clasped her

hands together and resumed her walk, or her position at the window. A consciousness of some deep, though unknown interest at hand, made my heart beat quick and held me motionless in suspense.

A door opened at the inner end of the chapel ; another female figure appeared and hastened over to where the former one was standing ; a neatly and precisely dressed figure it was, and the voice it uttered was also precise, but sweet and clear.

“Dear friend,” it said, “why wilt thou continue to frequent this gloomy place? What charm can its superstitious gloom possess for one like thee—and especially at such an hour. Come, I pray you, for our afternoon worship approaches, and the Colonel will be waiting our presence.”

“Dear Lucy,” replied a voice that made me start and oppressed my hearing by the quickened pulses it produced ; “dear Lucy, indulge me yet this once, and excuse my absence to your good Colonel. This is the last evening I shall be here, and there is something—I scarce know.

what, dearer to my feelings in these sacred places of the papists, than I should care to confess to less indulgent ears than thine."

"But mine ears, friend Zillah," returned the precise voice, "are by no means inclined to be indulgent to such feelings; especially when I think that there may be something in the thought of our prisoner overhead, that excites thine interest more than Popish devices and painted glass."

"Whatever it be," replied Zillah coldly, "I pray you to leave me for the present. I tell you I cannot at this moment join thy meeting, nor would I willingly again face those rough men of war with their formal words, but rude, uncivil looks."

"I grant thee," said the Governor's wife, "that these men are not all that I could wish, and for that reason I will leave thee this once to thine own fancy and musings, beseeching thee not to be late in attendance at the evening meal."

With these words Zillah was left alone. I determined to address her;—my chief

object in escaping had been to obtain an interview with her, and now it offered beyond my expectations. It was true that her exalted ideas of duty and patriotism might induce her to alarm her friends, and it was even possible that Hezekiah, who was evidently my chief detainer, might have sufficient influence to induce her to give me up. But if it were so, escape, or life itself, was scarcely worth the having. At all events, come what might, I would not lose the only opportunity I had had for many months, of addressing her and exculpating myself from the calumnies of the Puritan.

I stepped forth from my concealment, and at the same moment found myself by her side. A suppressed scream escaped her lips; she leant back against the pillar for support, and then gradually recovering herself, she slowly and wonderingly pronounced my name.

“Yes, that Reginald Hastings whom you have so often repelled—so long held at a distance—so easily believed culpable of the grossest faults; he stands before you now, a prisoner on the verge of liberty, waiting to hear his fate

from your lips. Zillah ! tell me, in this dangerous moment what have I done to deserve your doubts ? Why do you ever keep the first friend of your childhood at a distance, while you surrender your whole confidence to that dark and dangerous man who—”

“Hush,” said Zillah, placing her finger on her lip and listening anxiously, “I expect him here. Nay, start not,” she continued with a smile of kindly trustfulness, a smile bright with the promise of all I ever hoped for, or believed her to possess. “You have wronged me, Reginald, as you shall now learn ; but retire whence you came, quickly, and learn if you can, to what our interview may lead ; truly, I rejoice that you are to do so.”

Her anxious gestures for my withdrawal, were of necessity obeyed ; but I felt far from comfortable in my concealment. Bitter an enemy as Hezekiah had proved himself to be, I could not reconcile to myself the office of a spy upon his actions. But then he was Zillah’s friend, and she would surely care that no wrong happened to him through her agency. All this

time the storm was still raging wildly, and the chapel where we stood, was alternately filled with intense light, or wrapped in the deepest gloom.

Once or twice, during what followed, I thought I saw the figure of a man's head looking in at the window, but the distance from the ground might render it impossible. Zillah continued at her post, still leaning against the pillar, and seeming like a spirit to appear and vanish, as the lightning came and went; and so, for a long space, she kept her patient watch, looking out upon the storm.

At length the inner door opened once more, and she turned her head anxiously; by the next gleam of light, I saw Hezekiah standing by her side, scarcely three steps from where I lay in reluctant ambush.

"I am come," said he, in his usual calm, solemn tones, "to seek thee, by thy kinswoman's desire; she doth not hold it meet that a tender damsel should be here at such an hour. Yea, 'tender' was the word she used, but she knew thee not. Methinks, that this worse

than Pagan temple would rather affright than find favour in thy sight if thou wert tender," and here his own voice seemed to soften, but he resumed instantly in his own manner, "Yea, surely, Moloch never imagined aught more soul-destroying than the Popish mysteries that once polluted this temple of superstition: their gloomy influences seem to hang around it still. There—as the lightning flashes in upon us, those carved faces grin out horribly, as if roused from their stony sleep. And they say that these are the images of rival monks; verily, that they that made them are like unto them."

He ceased, and Zillah spoke: "Methinks, Sir, it would be more profitable, if my solitude must be broken into, that we should speak of what you said concerned me so much to know; for to-morrow I depart betimes from hence, and thou, as I understand, abidest here."

But Hezekiah appeared to think there was no necessity for haste. He too had been looking out upon the storm with stern delight; he seemed to have tasted of it, and become inspired with its spirit.

“I marvel not,” he exclaimed, “that a soul like thine can enjoy the fierce raging of these elements. These are sights and sounds to stir the spirit from its depths, and reveal its powers and its mysteries to kindred natures. Oh, would that I could do so—that I could reach thine inner ear—that thy heart, as well as thine understanding, were open to the ineffable happiness—the high intercourse—”

“A maiden’s heart, Sir, is no fit matter for conversation here,” said Zillah, in a voice so stern that I scarcely recognised it. “The last time that your words wandered thus, I forbade you ever to approach me but in the presence of others, and where your holy calling was sure to be remembered better than your distempered fancies. Once more I have permitted your presence in private; prove to me that such conference was not idly sought for, or—depart.”

Knowing the fiery and impetuous nature of the man whom Zillah thus addressed, I expected to hear high words in reply; but grief—unutterable grief, seemed to have bowed down his aspiring spirit, and the first fitful

gleam that relieved the darkness, I could see that his head was bowed upon his breast.

“Pardon me,” at length he said, in a subdued and hollow voice, “I ask pardon, if I presumed to hope for sympathy—even from a nature high and pure like thine. Yes, Lady, when first I knew thee, my mind was troubled with the mysteries of these troublous times, my spirit was well nigh broken with disappointment. I had looked abroad over this goodly land for some one worthy to impersonate the great cause—some one of pure heart and exalted intellect, and endued with that grace, without which all human gifts are snares. I looked, and found none—no, not one. And yet some consciousness of our great cause was to be found alive and stirring in ten thousand thousand hearts; but there was none who possessed the spell to arouse and make them one and irresistible. I then turned, in my despair, from men to thee. They who live much alone with their own souls, oftentimes see visions and dream dreams, that are some-

times revelations, and lead to miraculous success; sometimes but devices of the Evil One, to terminate in confusion and despair. Thou seemedst to me arrayed in all the gifts that could win hearts and souls of men to the great cause on which their happiness depended: thy dream-like beauty, thy commanding nature, thy ardent imagination, thine unconscious elegance—all seemed to mark thee out for the Deborah of our times—the Apostle of our cause. Lady, it was with no earthly or selfish aspirations that I first sought to work upon thy youthful heart, to steel it against the snares of the affections, and to preserve it to a loftier aim.”

The Puritan here paused a moment, and I could well understand why Zillah remained spell-bound in silence, for so did I. Those strange, wild words seemed a clue to our fate; they were uttered in low tones, but so clear, that the storm could not drown them, while the darkness that shrouded the speaker endued them with yet deeper impressiveness.

“Yes,” he resumed; “after all I have seen and

known since, I believe, that with me for thy minister, thou mightest have saved thy country from bloodshed, misery, and worse than all, approaching anarchy. There was one point of weakness in thy character, but that one was fatal, as it ever is in woman. Thou hadst parted with thy love, as Sampson with his hair, and, with it, all thy native strength.—Nay, Lady, listen now or never.—I knew that if once thy heart of sacrifice was touched, thou would'st do far more to defeat thy desires than to cherish them. But it was necessary, in the first place, to remove him who had unnerved thee with his love. For this reason, I brought that malignant, foppish Lord to his father's house to rob him of his son; for this cause, I had that son way-laid among the hills, and afterwards again, when escorting thy father and myself from Nottingham. Nay more, I did what tried my spirit sorely: for this cause I left the youth to be slaughtered as a spy, when a word of mine could have saved him; and now for this same cause, he lies a prisoner in this castle. Behold what a devouring zeal can do! . . . But

now that cause exists no longer ; the mantle hath fallen from thy shoulders, and I have wrought in vain—all in vain—save in His eyes where thoughts are deeds. He hath no longer need of thee for His work, for He hath raised up a mighty man into whose hand all things shall be delivered. Now behold what a clear spirit, zealous for the truth alone can bring itself to perform. This youth, the captive of my bow and spear, whom I have pursued even to the death—so long that he seemeth to me mine enemy—this youth is delivered into thine hand, do with him as thou listeth. My course is with thine no longer ; thou hast started aside like a broken bow, and I must work alone—yea, alone—alone for ever in the flesh ! Happy, if in submissively enduring my darkly-fated lot, I may be permitted to purge off the foul dross of earthly infirmities and grievous sin.”

The voice was silent ; the lightning had ceased to play, so that I no longer could catch glimpses of him who uttered it ; the storm, too, had exhausted its fury, and like the Puritan's tones, had subsided gradually into mournful

cadences. He spoke no more; perhaps he did not trust himself, for he strode away towards the chapel-door with a heavy and echoing tread, that seemed to trample on his own desolate heart.

CHAPTER XIV.

Quella benigna, angelica salute,
Che 'l mio cor' a virtute
Destar solea con una voglia accesa ;
Tal ch' io non penso udir cosa giammai.

PETRARCA.

THE door had no sooner closed upon the Puritan than I stood by Zillah's side. I perceived she was in tears, and every motive induced me to keep silence until she spoke. At length she whispered, " You see all that you have suffered for my sake. Perhaps you have also learnt that I have had some share of trial since that noble-minded, but frantic man first doomed me as an unconscious agent in his unimaginable schemes. I need not appeal to your generosity for secrecy in this strange

matter as regards his story; your own feelings will insure its safety, as if it were my own. Doubtless, moreover, you are free, and therefore you must return, if it be possible, whence you came, and all our plans for your escape are nought."

So saying, she flung a small piece of paper with some weight attached to it from the window, and listened eagerly. There was no sound audible, however, but the creaking of the chapel-door, which now opened and scarcely left me time to withdraw behind a pillar. A very earnest remonstrance followed from the voice of Mrs. Hutchinson, and Zillah with her friend withdrew.

It was long before I regained my cell, having, in the first instance, watched anxiously at the window for that which Zillah strove to hear. I then ascended to my prison as fast as I was able. The fire was almost extinguished, and I had some difficulty in re-lighting my cresset lamp. Scarcely had I done so, and cleared my dress from the marks of my late attempt, when

footsteps sounded along the gallery, the door opened, and Colonel Hutchinson himself appeared.

He saluted me very courteously, regretted my long imprisonment, hoped that it was now nearly terminated, and late as it was, (near eight o'clock) that I would join his family at supper and evening prayer. I accepted his proposal with as much pleasure as if I had not heard before of my improved fortunes, and descended the stone stairs with a sensation of delight.

In the circle collected round the high fireplace in the hall, I perceived Zillah and the governor's wife, whom I had seen in the chapel some two hours before. To the latter, I was formally presented, but my long acquaintance with the former was well known to these cousins of whom I had often heard. Mrs. Hutchinson's appearance was by no means puritanical, no more than that of her care-worn but soldier-like looking husband. He wore his hair long, in the fashion of our Cavaliers, and his fair

wife likewise indulged in rich auburn curls, that set off her serene and delicate beauty to advantage.*

This amiable and accomplished lady instantly adapted herself to her husband's manner towards me; and with grave sweetness hoped that as a guest I should be able to forget that I had been their visitor in any other light. I returned to her my sincere and hearty thanks for all the courtesies that I had received, but especially for the great kindness which I felt had been extended towards me in my illness. Mrs. Hutchinson glanced involuntarily towards Zillah, and declared that she done but little—only a small part of the duty that she owed to her Christian profession, and that she was, after all, but an unprofitable servant.

In such conversation, the minutes seemed to me to fly rapidly; when we were interrupted by the entrance of several officers in buff coats, who

* A beautiful picture of this lady (as our Cavalier describes her) is in the possession of Sir Robert Bromley, at Stoke Park.

looked as if they had just come off duty. I then observed that the table was spread with abundant though homely fare for a large party, and I heard that these officers belonged to a regiment that was marching through.

They were Sir John Gell's Fencibles, and I was not surprised at Zillah's reluctance to meet them, for without prejudice, they were the most ill-favoured company of men I ever saw. Mrs. Hutchinson herself, by no means seemed to approve of them,* and coldly seconded her husband's effort to be hospitable. The Colonel said a long grace, or rather prayer, excellent of its sort, and then we fell to supper. Soon afterwards, Hezekiah entered, and took his place at the lower end of the board, where the Round-head troopers had already begun to make some

* As she confesses in her own interesting Memoirs, written at this time: in these Memoirs, however, all mention of the Cavalier's episode is omitted, probably for family reasons; the good lady was not writing history, and, therefore, perhaps, did not feel obliged to tell the whole truth.

noise. Instantly, however, their noise was hushed, and their meal finished hastily and in solemn silence.

We then rose, and stood during another grace, longer than the preceding one, and not very reverentially attended to by Gell's Fencibles. All were then preparing to retire, when a man-at-arms entered, and presented the Colonel with a sealed despatch, saying that a messenger waited for a reply. At the same time, he informed Mrs. Hutchinson that a poor lad, who seemed to be one of the faithful, craved admittance and a night's lodging in the Castle.

"He hath a cunning hand and a sweet harp," said the soldier; "and as thou turnest not away the poor, nor them that beg their bread from thy gates, I thought that I might admit him. Verily, he is one of the sweet singers of Israel, and hath much of my own trick in psalmody."

Mrs. Hutchinson smiled, (she did not observe, as *I* did, that her husband's brow darkened over his despatch), and said to Zillah: "We have had much trouble and weariness to-day; we will, if it please you, even hear this lad, since his melody is such as we may approve."

At a signal from his lady, the soldier withdrew and soon returned, accompanied by a young man, who looked poor, and weary, and travel-stained ; he carried a small harp upon his shoulders, and stooped so low, even after his obeisance, that we could not see his face. The lady of the Castle, with Zillah and the rest of the household, resumed their places near the fire. Hezekiah stood apart, conversing in low tones with one of the strange officers, and the boy timidly seated himself on a small stool that had been placed for him at some distance from the fire. His head was still bent low, as he leaned over his harp, touching its sweet strings with a master's hand, when preluding with some wilder notes, he began to sing that beautiful lament on the captivity of Israel :

“ By the waters of Babylon, we sat down and wept,
When we remembered thee—”

So far he sang in deep, low, touching tones, but the words “ remembered thee ” were accompanied with a more emphatic tone, and an upward glance, that seemed to flash at once

over Zillah and me before it reached the rafters. It was Bryan who sate before us.

A momentary surprise passed over Zillah's countenance, and was gone; but I was obliged to bury my face in my hands, as if absorbed by the music which continued its fine accompaniment to the end.

Gradually as the minstrel proceeded, the various people in the room gathered nearer, and formed a breathless circle round him. Most of all, Hezekiah seemed touched; his pale and rigid features relaxed, and an almost soft expression stole over their stern character. Even so might Saul have found his dark shadows charmed away by the young shepherd King.

As soon as the psalm was ended, a low sound of applause, conveyed in many *hums*, went round, but Hezekiah was the only one who spoke. He advanced towards me, and said, almost courteously, that he was glad that psalm applied to me no longer, as he had handed to the Governor an order from the Committee for my release. The Governor tried to interrupt his speech, and when it was finished, he

rejoined: "Not so—I have another order here which must not be gainsaid, to guard this prisoner diligently, until the writer shall have speech with him."

Hezekiah's eye flashed unusual fire as he turned to the Governor. "Show me the order that dares contradict the decree of the Committee of both Houses," said he, with the voice of one accustomed to authority.

"Behold!" replied the Colonel; "it is a very brief one. Yours, moreover, bears date November 5th, whereas this is dated scarce five hours ago; but read for yourself; the order is signed by OLIVER CROMWELL."

Hezekiah snatched at the note, read it, and bowed submissively. "Yea, it is even so—it is the hand and word of one to whom the good cause is now committed. Sir, you will do your duty."

So saying, without another word or glance towards any one present, the preacher retired.

The Governor then addressed me almost apologetically: "You have heard my orders, which I must obey, however reluctantly; I dare

not even offer you parole, as I would fain do, if only to ensure your safe-keeping ; but we have now to deal with a hard man, who may not be withstood."

"I accepted this unpalatable declaration with as good a grace as I could command, and then drew near to Zillah, while the Governor went to summon my gaoler, and Mrs. Hutchinson thoughtfully withdrew to speak to the disguised harper. I hastily asked Zillah who was this new personage, this Cromwell, of whom they all stood in awe.

"He is one," said she, "as yet little regarded, except by those who know him well : but with them, his will is imperative, and the Committee never questions what it pleases him to do. Moreover, I suspect he means to sell you your liberty at the price of your estates, for his ingenuity and unscrupulousness in raising money are notorious."

"I will remain and see him, then," I replied, "if only to prevent the appearance of your being involved in my flight. I suspect that Bryan has risked his life to assist my escape, and not

without your privy. He it was whose face I observed looking in at the chapel window during the storm? I thought so. Tell him, if alive, I shall meet him two nights hence on the bridge toward the Newark road. And now I observe that the Governor begins to wax impatient; so farewell. What I would say, after all I have heard this night, is not for this place to hear, scarcely for these lips to utter. My proudest and happiest hope is satisfied—almost to the uttermost.”

But one pressure of her outstretched hand, one glance towards Bryan, one bow of acknowledgment to my host and hostess, and I was gone. Closely followed by my gaoler, I returned through the long dark gallery, and once more heard the iron bolts and bars that so vainly endeavoured to secure me.

CHAPTER XV.

You have stooped my neck under your injuries,
And sighed my English breath in foreign clouds,
Eating the bitter bread of banishment :
Whilst you have fed upon my seignories,
Disparked my parks, and felled my forest-wood ;
Razed out my impress, leaving me no sign,
Save men's opinions, and my living blood,
To shew the world I am a gentleman.

SHAKESPERE.

How vainly we attempt to mete out our lives by spaces of time—hours, weeks, days—as measured by the clock. In the soul's life, a few minutes may do the work of years, whilst a lapse of years may pass us by unnoticed. At one time we seem to stand still, while the world whirls on without us ; at another, we seem to fly towards another existence or some great

change, at a pace that leaves our own world far, far behind us.

Thus months had lately passed over me in such shapeless monotony, that I seemed as if in one long torpid dream, with nothing but my heap of manuscript to remind me that I had had existence, or employed it. Now, lo ! between the hours of six and nine of the town clock, the events of half a life have come thronging in, and that so rapidly, that I have scarcely yet found leisure to arrange and recollect them. I know not when it was that Zillah told me that she had left her father ill at ease in mind and body, when she heard that I was dying ; that she had come hither in a litter, escorted by Colonel Hutchinson's brother, who was convoying supplies from Lincolnshire to London, and was to return thither the next day ; that her father had been more and more severely mulcted by the Parliament, and had at length begun to form plans of leaving England ; that my old home had been utterly pillaged, and, it was said, even sold, with all my lands, by order of the Committee of Sequestrations. All this must have transpired in conversation at

supper, for such details would never have found a hearing when we were alone, or out of others' hearing. I had now ample time, however, to reconsider them, and to plan my own movements, in case of my escape.

'Twas a wide subject for consideration ; I was homeless and houseless in the world. I had demanded and received five months' leave of absence, and unless I passed that time carousing among the northern loyal garrisons, or, hunted like a partridge among my native hills, I knew not at this moment what was to become of me. At length I resolved, at all risks, to seek my old home once more, to procure one more interview with Zillah, and then, like the knights-errant of old, to leave it to Providence to shape my future courses. And so I fell asleep.

Before dawn, however, I was awake and listening for the sound of Zillah's horses, which I soon afterwards heard or thought I heard ; for the various noises of this warlike little city were wont to begin betimes, and the drums and trumpets of the castle guard anticipated the day.

So passed some hours without event, but towards noon, I heard more noise than usual, and the sound of troops mustering on parade. When my goaler entered, he informed me, that Colonel Cromwell was arrived, and that the whole garrison was under arms for his inspection. Since my being received as one of the family on the previous night, my attendant seemed to consider himself at liberty to converse with me; he even informed me that the great Colonel was by no means the exalted-looking person he had expected to behold.

“Not,” said he, “but he’s a stout personable-enough man for a halberdier, or the like o’ that; but his clothes are so mean and ill of fashion, and his bit o’ linen all stained and rumpled like—pooh! you’d never believe him to be one o’ the gentlefolks, not by no means.”

I observed that an active soldier might easily be excused some faults of dress, and demanded what sort of face he had, for that could not be so easily altered.

“Could it not!” said my simple-minded informant. “As I’m a sinner, I never saw two different men more unlike, since I was a babe,

than I have seen this same Colonel within the last half-hour. Why, sir, when we were all assembled in the hall to hear him expound and pray, I thought him the mildest and resignedest Christian I ever beheld, and as for his eyes, I could see nothing but the whites of them, and that same half lost under his big eyebrows. But, save us! when I saw him next—(you see when the others had left the hall, after the expounding—which, indeed, I didn't overmuch understand—one or two of us, that are in trust, were bid to wait for orders), when, our governor said something to this new Colonel about your being half-released from bondage, I looked for his answer, and his look a' most made one stagger back. Why, I'd take my oath on't (if swearing wasn't unlawful for a Christian man,) that no ten men, no, and their wives to boot, ever put so much anger into a single look: and it wasn't the anger only, but the strength that was in it, that made me pity our poor governor, and wonder he could stand it. And then this Colonel Cromwell stamps, and calls out for our Hezekiah, and bellows about Saul and

Amelikites, and other hard words ; and when he heard that the minister wasn't heard of since the lady went away this morning, he sat down by the table, and clenched his fists, and then clasped them, and I believe, took to expounding himself for comfort, for he said no more out loud to any one. And then, at a sign from the governor, we went out at last ; and you see that's the reason that your dinner's so cold to day."

My gaoler might have gone on much longer to such a ready listener as he found in me, but that he was alarmed by the sound of running steps along the gallery, and a hasty knocking at the door. A man-at-arms had been sent to desire him to bring me with all speed before this redoubtable Colonel, and I followed him with some interest to the well-remembered hall.

There stood Cromwell, now not only calm, but immoveable-looking. I did not then note the rest of his appearance ; my whole attention was rivetted on the massive, but deeply-marked countenance that met mine. The bold, broad brow bespoke indomitable resolution rather than

command ; the clear, small eyes (grey I believe they are) that glanced out from beneath his shaggy eye-lashes, were not what is called piercing, but they looked *inevitable* ; if I may use that word to express that it seemed impossible to baffle them. The nose was of the shape and somewhat of the colour that toppers celebrate, but the mouth might have become Rhadamanthus himself. The whole visage seemed to argue a marvellous compound of subtlety and strength, yet over all was a strange and almost noble expression of immortal sorrow ; something sublime indeed, that fixed itself more deeply in my memory than all else.

This singular man now stood in a firm, but ungraceful attitude to receive me. Two of his officers leaned against the mantel-piece where Zillah had been the night before, and Colonel Hutchinson remained apart. The only person seated seemed to be a sergeant, who took from his side pouch, pen, ink, and paper, and placed them on the table with his iron head-piece and carbine, which he had carelessly

unslung. He appeared to act as his chief's secretary.

After a few minutes' silence and scrutiny, Cromwell, to my surprise, turned away from me, and thus addressed his officers, aloud :

“Behold ! this is the sort of man with whom we have to deal ; this is the work put upon us. Yea, here is a brave gentleman—one of good report ; honourable and just moreover in his generation, and well-beloved by the dwellers on his lands. One whom we have marked as not swift to shed blood, or greedy of gain, or profane, or a wine-bibber.” He paused, and I began to feel nervous about the conclusion of this most unexpected eulogium, though I had not *then* known his panegyric, and swiftly following denunciation of the brave Lord Capel. He now looked at his officers steadily and mournfully, as if he was reading some unwelcome counsel in their countenance, as he resumed : “But it is even so, my masters ; ye say that having put his hand to the accursed thing, he must pay the penalty thereof. It

may not be that the people suffer both ways—that they be not only warred against in the field, but likewise defrauded of their righteous spoil. Is it not so, my masters? Wherefore, young man, I have sent to have speech with thee; for the Parliament is very merciful, and would not condemn any man without a hearing. What sayest thou?—why should not thine estates be sequestrated according to the laws in this case made and provided? And thou shalt have liberty to depart the kingdom, and mayest thou find fit comfort as well as chastisement for thy poor soul amid thy wanderings!”

However unintelligible to me the preamble might have been, the conclusion of Cromwell’s speech required no explanation. He spoke, however, as one who considered me as a surely bound prisoner; I answered him as one who possessed the means of freedom. I briefly denied having committed any crime against the people, in whose true cause alone, I asserted, I had freely expended my money and my blood, as I was ready to do my life. I confessed, however, that I had the strongest objections to the

sequestration of my property, in order to further his views of the people's necessities ; and I requested to know what would be the result of my refusal to accept the boon of banishment in return for the loss of my estates.

“ Behold,” replied Cromwell, turning again to his officers instead of to me, “ behold how bravely he speaketh. Verily he hath a great gift of words. Ah, me ! to think of his blindness withal, and how the prince of this world can darken the best understanding. Why, man,” continued he, suddenly turning to me, changing his tone, and speaking rapidly, “ why, man, thou art a lawful prisoner to the Parliament ; the labourer is worthy of his hire ; thy ransom must be paid ; yea, and thy sins of malignancy atoned for, if not with thy property, it may be with thy life.”

My spirit was now roused within me as if I had met this mine adversary in the field instead of in an argument ; he appeared to me as though he stood confronted with and confronting my King. I was about to defy him, therefore, when Hezekiah entered the hall, and walked up

to the place where we were standing, without any salutation or apology. Cromwell turned to him, and demanded gravely,

“Where hast thou been loitering? Long have we waited for thee, in deference to the wishes of the Committee, expecting that thou wouldst assist us in the matter of this malignant; but thou tarriedst, and we have proceeded without thy help to announce to him his sequestration, and free grace to depart the country.”

Hezekiah met this chiding with his usual calm, impassive look.

“Then with submission, thou hast erred in so doing,” he said, “and thy words are wind. Thou can’st not take from him what is not his.”

He then proceeded, with unmoved voice and countenance, to state that when, by the Parliament order, the house of Beaumanoir was destroyed, he had applied himself to the examination of the family papers, and he therein had found—what had been revealed to him by one

of his flock—a deed disinheriting me and all my family. It appeared, according to his statement, that my great grandfather happened to have power over the estates, and he, in a fit of anger, had disinherited his elder son in favour of his second son, (who was grandfather to my cousin Hotspur.) The elder, who was then abroad, returned on hearing of his father's illness, but he found him dead. My grandfather had never known of the disinheriting deed, nor thought of examining into legal papers that had descended from father to son for six hundred years: he was satisfied with discharging the obligations of his father's will, made many years before. Meanwhile his second brother was only anxious that none, and he least of all, should ever know that such a deed existed, as that which would have deprived his elder brother of his possessions. He could not, however, abstract the dangerous document without breaking seals, or without his brother's knowledge; so, not knowing much of business, he trusted to chance, and to the death of the lawyer who

had drawn the deed, for its eternal concealment. He received the moderate patrimony allotted to him in his father's will, and established himself at some distance ; his son, marrying the heiress of Ashby, was the father of my cousin, Harry Hotspur.

When the troubles broke out, a legend of this transaction reached the ears of Hezekiah, whilst he was in our neighbourhood. He had traced that legend till it assumed the likelihood of a truth, and, finally, he had possessed himself of this document after the sack of our house : with the views he then held, it had promised to be of importance to him.

“ All this,” he continued, looking at me with the same unmoved aspect, “ I thought it expedient to declare in the young man's presence, in order that he may hold to no vain hopes of becoming once more a dweller in the house of his fathers : it is desolate, and he is a beggar. Wherefore I would counsel him that he gird up his loins, and be stirring in a new life : that he turn to profit his departure into strange lands ; and, fighting for the good cause amongst

our brethren in Germany, that he may win his bread in a righteous cause."

He ceased and turned his deep bright eyes upon mine with searching scrutiny, in which I imagined a gleam of triumph might have been detected. That thought enabled me to meet his gaze with steady defiance: the astonishing news that I had just heard was, indeed, too sudden to affect me, as afterwards it did, when I thought of the world of consequences it involved, and that the very graves of my ancestors belonged to another. Thinking at the moment, however, only of retorting his scrutiny, I replied,

"Whatever were the motives, Sir, that prompted *your* zealous search for this important document, I declare upon mine honour, as a gentleman, that I would have assisted your search with my best efforts, had I had the remotest suspicion that such a document existed—ay, and so would my father and my brave brother, who, it seems now probable, perished by your devices."

"And doubtless the young man says truly ;"

exclaimed Cromwell, with something of a noble and believing air: "yea, doubtless truly. And now," said he, turning rather grimly to Hezekiah, "I would inquire where hast thou been with all this knowledge hidden in thy heart, while the servant of the saints has been talking foolishly. Speak out, man, for it seemeth that our prisoner is to be in all our councils."

"Last night," replied Hezekiah, "when the note was read to me, I knew thou wouldst not be far off, and I hasted to seek the spoiler who dwelleth at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, but who is now nearer at hand on some evil design. He it is whom thou shalt sequester; but I desired to have better tidings for thee. I approached him at the peril of my worthless life, and I offered to make him possessor (as in sooth he is by law) of all these estates, if he would convert his sword into a reaping-hook, or draw it in the faithful cause."

"And he spurned thee?" interrupted Cromwell.

"He reviled me, it is true, after the manner

of the profane," Hezekiah replied coldly, and continued: "I then announced to him that he was the actual possessor of this property, but that speedy sequestration of the whole would speedily follow, unless he consented to such fine as the Parliament, (who through me, their unworthy instrument, had procured for him all this estate) should appoint."

"And so Harry Hastings threatened to hang thee—was it not so?" demanded Cromwell, with a grim, sarcastic smile.

"Nay;" resumed Hezekiah, "but he desired to see the document with such a pleased look, that I might have wrought great things if I had had it then."

"Fool!" said Cromwell impatiently, "it is time thou weanest thyself from men's affairs, for thou growest altogether too insane. I tell thee, he would have seized it and thrust it in the fire, and sworn after his profane fashion to this young man that it never existed, and was all a lie. Tut, man, I know he would! I would have done the same myself, when I walked in

blindness and unregeneracy. But enough of this : hie thee straightway to thine apartment and fetch this precious document, and give it into the safe-keeping of "Hold-fast-the-faith" here. Sequestration shall issue straightway thereon.—Not against thee, poor youth, but against thy mad cousin.—Now for the matter wherein thou art in truth concerned ; I will take thy parole word, that thou depart this kingdom within five days, for which I will give thee my free pass ; if not, the sentence which was pronounced against thee as a spy in Waller's malignant plot, shall surely be put into execution and thou shalt die.—Lo ! it is written."

And after some fumbling in his huge pockets, he produced a paper among many others, which bore my name and certain signatures. I only glanced coldly at the paper ; I answered : "I will not be voluntarily a banished man. Do your worst upon me."

"Be it so !" said my judge solemnly, and he then motioned the governor to remove me. I

soon found myself once more in silence, and once more face to face with death ; or at the best with perilous escape and a life of penury before me.

CHAPTER XVI.

When flowing cups go swiftly round,
With no allaying Thames ;
Our careless heads with helmets crowned,
Our hearts with loyal flames.
When thirsty toil in wine we steep,
When healths and draughts go free ;
Fishes that tipple in the deep
Know no such liberty.

LOVELACE.

I CONSIDERED myself secure from violence until the morrow at all events ; but then, I had sent Bryan notice not to expect me until the night following, and I feared for the danger he would thereby incur. If I would avoid an ignominious death, however, I felt that I had no alternative but to escape this very night. I endeavoured to fix my saddened thoughts upon

the measures necessary for me to take, and postponed my reflections on my altered condition to a time when I should have more leisure for them. I resumed my preparations for departure, and then waited with impatience for the gaoler's last evening visit to be ended. This poor fellow had, however, been kind to me, after his fashion, and I felt some remorse as to the consequences he might suffer from my escape. When he appeared, I asked him if he had ever lost a prisoner? He looked at me very knowingly, as if he had detected me in making overtures to him ;

"No, no," said he, "it won't do. I never lost a prisoner, and I never will."

"But," I persisted, "suppose he lost himself, would you suffer for it?"

"Why, no," he replied, thoughtfully, and scratching his head—"I don't s'pose I should ; for I'm no regular gaoler like, but only doing the business out of my common duty as a soldier, to oblige the Governor. Well," he continued, desirous of changing the subject, "old Noll, as they call him, is gone, and has left the Governor looking as if he had seen a ghost,

instead of a man in buff and steel, who weighs thirteen stone, if he weighs an ounce. Nevertheless it's a weight off my poor mind that the castle's clear of him." And with these words the good fellow left me.

I was about to commence my operations on the hearth-stone, when a thought struck me that the Governor, or even Hezekiah, might visit me, and this thought kept me quiet until all was still within the castle. Then I cautiously explored my former track, closing the hearth-stone like a tomb above me, as I descended into darkness. With some difficulty I gained entrance into the old chapel, and at length discovered the mock tombstone that opened into Mortimer's Hole. Thence I found my way, guided by the noise, to where the guard was set. Close to the light of their watch-fire I crept, and found a crevice that opened into the natural cave below. Then I groped my way into a broad meadow and stood free. In that exulting and glorious consciousness, I forgot all my sorrows past, and dangers to come.

Surely mere life itself must be a blessing,

though we generally lose its physical enjoyment in the mental cares with which our coward anxieties are for ever clouding it. There stood I, in the very shadow of the castle where danger and captivity and death awaited me; the dreariest weather of winter was howling round me, and a long and dangerous march before me. Yet I was happy, triumphantly happy. Hope bounded in every pulse, and imagination pictured a possible future, that all the consciousness of all my utter ruin and imminent danger could scarcely darken for the time. * * *

It was too early to seek Bryan at the bridge, and some chance traveller might be still stirring, so I flung myself on the dry rushes that lay scattered under the shelter of a haystack; there without impatience or suspense, I waited until my prison clock should strike midnight, and announce to me the best hour of completing my escape for ever from its doleful voice.

Indeed, I had abundant matter for reflection and forethought. Within the last few hours the whole colour and character of my life and posi-

tion had been changed. As long as I remained in the Roundhead's country, I was an outlaw—everywhere I was penniless. It was sometime before I could realize to my imagination, that I was actually, not only disinherited, but that I owed to another family all the money, justly theirs, that I or my father had ever spent. We had even supplied the King's necessities with another's wealth; but this alone I did not feel called upon to regret. Had it not been for our loyalty, our home had never been pillaged and ransacked, or our false position revealed to us by the discoveries that were then made there.

For some time the sudden consciousness of poverty weighed very heavily on my thoughts, but I soon flung off that care; I felt proudly that I was able to work my own passage across the Sea of Life. Nine-tenths of my fellow-men were doing the same thing, cheerfully and manfully,—and why not I? With head and heart and hand as good as theirs, I surely could as easily supply the actual wants of existence; its necessities, so simple and so few, although its desires are insatiable. My

condition was now merely that of a soldier of fortune, and I should have preferred to have exercised that stirring trade in the Swedish or Dutch army, but duty seldom bribes with inclination to her stern standard. As long as my King was in the field, it was my simple duty to follow him, and to consider his interest in every respect as superior to my own.

It was long before I ventured to admit the thought of Zillah into the contingencies of my new condition. I proudly felt, however, that to her it would make no difference ; but I also felt, that until the present unhappy troubles were ended, my relations with her must continue unaltered.

The castle clock at length sounded midnight, and roused me from my reverie. I stood up and began my career through the world as a man who has nought on earth to depend upon but himself. Alas for him with whom that dependence fails in his hour of need ! I strode forth fearlessly, and smiled to think how ill I was provided for my future trade. I was unarmed, I had not even a knife wherewith to cut

a stake from the hedge ; I broke one and felt I had got over the first difficulty, and thus furnished, I marched away.

I restrained my new-born feeling of penniless independence, however, as I approached the castle gates leading to the opposite bridge. Though worth nothing to myself, I should have been a valuable prize to a Roundhead trooper, for I was still Lord Hastings. I passed safely and unnoticed, however, as if my new position had been recognised, and silently moved on through almost perfect darkness towards the river. Hist ! is it the wind that whistles through the arches of the bridge ? Yes, as I stand, all is still. Again I advance more cautiously, and then the whistle sounds again, more shrilly—and familiar. I know it well, and the faithful voice that thus welcomes me. I answer, and the next moment Bryan is by my side, whispering eagerly—

“Haste, haste, the Castle’s alarmed—I hear them stirring—there goes the trumpet. Blessed Mother, I thank thee that I came ! Away ! Away !”

So saying, and running at a speed that I could scarcely follow, he turned to the right beyond the bridge, into a swampy meadow, and continued his race. "Tread carefully here," he whispered; "there's only a bit of a willow hurdle I made to-day, and the bog on each side is deep enough to sink a church. That's all right—on, on!" Stepping cautiously along his basket-work bridge, I followed at speed, until we approached a willow grove by the river.

By this time the Castle gates were thrown open, torches were gleaming, and drums beating in all directions. A detachment of horse galloped off over the bridge, and along the road towards Newark, the only one of safety.

"Let them go," said Bryan; "let them go! I only pray they may fall in with old Willis's patrol. I heard all that passed to-day, and though you said "to-morrow" night, I knew it must be to-night or never. Now I've got the Devil here, Heaven be praised." (Bryan always rejected my horse's name of Satan with indignation; he said it was a Pagan's, not a Christian's name). "I have got the Devil here behind

the willows, and you'll ride along the river's side about a mile, (there's a swamp all the way between the road and you), and then you'll see a blessed cross that I stuck up in the open space; and you'll swim the river there, where it stands, right across, and you'll land upon a common, where there's a horse-track, that you'll stick close to, and it will take you to a lane, and a narrow bridge, and then, hurrah! you're in shelter of Newark; and I warned them to have a strong picket out to watch for you. Never fear for me; I'm a poor lad with lodgings in yon village, and in half an hour, I'll be in through the window, and defy the whole Committee, and Cromwell to boot."

So he spoke, in a low, but exulting voice; just then the troopers halted on the road, and we could hear their officer exclaim: "No further than this could he have got. Dismount half-a-dozen of you, and try the meadow; look to your carbines, and don't spare powder."

We heard the arms of a dozen troopers ring

as they leaped from their saddles, and approached us.

“We’re safe still,” whispered Bryan, crouching down, for the villains can’t pass the swamp. Steal on to the horse, and ride for the dear life—nay, never fear me, they’ll think all’s gone when they hear the Devil’s hoofs along the meadow.”

I pressed my faithful Bryan’s hand in silence, and groped my way among the willows towards my last hopes of safety. My trusty guide accompanied me to the water’s edge, and slung himself softly down beneath the bank. I then proceeded more cheerfully, and at length espied my gallant Satan’s black form. The moment, however, that I touched him, the poor beast recognised me with a joyful neigh, and almost instantly half-a-dozen carbine bullets whistled among the willows. Then, as I galloped away, I could hear the splash of heavy bodies struggling in the swamp, crying loudly for assistance, while the troopers on the road forbore to fire for fear of shooting their own men.

For some time, I could hear my pursuers, now trampling along the road, now turning off upon the meadow, until some one of their number would flounder in the swamp, and then the trampling on the road began again. But I soon lost all hearing of them, as I plunged with my fearless horse into the river, and after a tough struggle for it, reached the opposite bank. Thence, following the appointed signs, I soon reached the lane, the bridge, and at length the grand old Castle of Newark.

There I obtained instant entrance, for my approach had been expected, and heard by the watchful warders. Byron, with one arm in a sling, was waiting to receive and welcome me, which he did with good grace, though evidently disturbed in the midst of conviviality.

“You-ou’ve saved us a jo-ob,” he hiccuped out, as he led the way to the banqueting-hall; “for, to-morrow, (or to-day, I be-believe it is), we would have sto-orrrrmed that cuck-cuckolddy castle of Notting’m about their cropop ears for them. Why, they were going to shoo-oat thee, man.”

When we entered the fine old hall, its high rafters rang with the vociferous welcomes of half-a-dozen Cavaliers who were drinking round a tremendous fire; as many more started up from benches where they had been dozing, and once more the rafters rang with welcomes, and shouts for the King, and imprecation on the Roundheads.

“But business,—business, my jolly mess-mates,” said Philip Monckton, who was as drunk as any of them, but so accustomed to act under those circumstances, that he was fitter to do so. “Business, my roaring lads, must be first attended to. Old Willis is gone to meet this most worshipful and dripping lord, and we need recal him. Ho, you, sir,” he continued to a staggering man-at-arms who seemed to officiate in the double capacity of butler and orderly; “get up to the tower and bid Fowler fire three falconets, one minute between each; do you hear? and see that the horse-boys are up and ready to take the horses of the picket when they return.”

My friends now heard the narrative of Bryan’s

admirable arrangements and of my escape, with fresh applause. They hastened to produce for me, each from his own scanty wardrobe, some article that might replace the dripping garments that I wore. Nor was a cup of mulled sack forgotten, swallowed to the health of the brave harper. The staggering halberdier returned, and we heard the three pieces of artillery discharged.

“There they go,” said the man, with the hiccuping voice of his superiors, “but t’others won’t come, I doubt.”

“And why not, thou drunken varlet?” stammered out Gerrard.

“Because they’ve got business on their hands, Sir, and they’re hammering on the pates of the rebelly Roundheads.”

“Ha! say you so?” cried Byron, starting to his feet, forgetting his wounded arm, as well apparently, as his intoxication: “let’s to horse, then, gentlemen, and share the sport; the sick men, (and they are plenty), can keep the castle.”

“With all my heart,” I exclaimed, taking

down from the wall the first sword I met, and all the Cavaliers echoed my rejoinder.

We soon found our way to the stables, each man girding himself up as best he might, on his way down stairs; some hastily buckled on a gorget or a haquetin, others mounted in their doublets. I found poor Satan just made comfortable, but he seemed eager for action, and was almost the first steed that was bestrode. It was reported to us that the skirmish could not be far off, as the firing was plainly heard, though the flashing of the fire-arms could not be seen through the darkness and the vapours of the night. As we rode apace, however, we soon heard confused noises, and at length met our Cavaliers with three or four prisoners captured in the brief skirmish.

I need not dwell further upon this incident. We returned in triumph to the castle, drank the King's health, and turned into our beds, after seeing our horses well cared for. The prisoners were committed only to the guard-room, and their horses led to the stalls, of which there were

many vacant latterly, as skirmishes had been frequent.

The following morning, the prisoners were brought up before a council of war to be examined. Two of them were only musqueteers, who in their eagerness had mounted spare horses, in order to pursue. Among these I discovered my gaoler, and when I addressed him familiarly, he merely answered with downcast head and looks, "Yea, verily, it is captivity led captive, and my reputation as a turnkey is spoilt for ever."

In answer to my question, he told me that the Governor could not sleep for what Cromwell had told him; that he had demanded the key of my cell at midnight, and proceeded thither with the big book from which he was wont to expound. Almost immediately afterwards, however, the castle had been in an uproar; the turnkey, first imprisoned, then set free upon examination; and finally, instant orders were given to pursue me. The horse pursued, having a vague impression, however, that I had escaped

by witchcraft, as no trace of my means of escape had been discovered.

“Nay, more,” continued the poor fellow, “one of our best troopers, who was afterwards cut down, took his oath that he heard voices by the river side before he fired; one was speaking of the actual presence of the Enemy of Man!”

Without much difficulty, I procured this poor man’s release, and dispatched him back to Nottingham, with a letter of warm thanks to Colonel Hutchinson for his courtesies. I even told him of the manner in which I had effected my escape, in order to clear him and all others of suspected complicity therein.

CHAPTER XVII.

The ditty does remember my dead father.

SHAKESPERE.

WHEN I awoke next morning, I found Bryan standing by my bed; the harp that had been so serviceable was in his hand. He told me, as carelessly as if he had been taking a walk for recreation, that when he reached his bed in the village inn the night before, he couldn't sleep, and he thought he might as well walk on here, especially as he knew that the road would be well cleared between

the two parties of horse, whichever had the best of it.

“ And now tell me,” said I, “ where learnt you your harp minstrelsy ; for I almost doubted it was you, when I saw you, and heard you play upon that instrument ?”

“ Ah,” said he, “ you know not how dear is the harp to an Irishman, or how natural it comes to him to touch those strings,” (as he swept his own over them), “ every one of which has its fellow in his own wild heart. I believe that David loved it because the angels” (and he crossed himself) “ use it, and surely its notes are more like the voice of spirits than any earthly music is. Hear this !” he cried with enthusiasm, as he sank upon one knee, and conjured up from among the harp-strings such an exquisite wild passionate dirge as I never heard before. It seemed to search the very depths of the heart, and

thrilling there awakened unknown sympathies, and brought the tears into my eyes unconsciously. Now deep and low, like the sound of far-distant wailing, with here and there a shriller note of bursting woe; and nearer and louder the sorrow seemed to come, and then was hushed. Before the strings had ceased to vibrate, the music recommenced in solemn tones, like chanted prayer, and then abruptly ceased, but only for a moment, for soon it soared away into the very wildest numbers, as if it was collecting all the memories of the mourned dead—now loud and jubilant, as if in triumph—now soft, and low, and tender, as if in whispered and happy love.

The harp ceased. “That,” said he, “is the first music I ever learnt: it’s the coronach that was made for my father’s funeral. It was taught me by an old harper that our pirates caught, and kept to play for them on Rachlin

Island, long ago. I had almost forgotten it, but it has come back to me, note by note, when I've been lying ill, as if spirits brought it to me. Well—as I was saying—I learned harp music from the best harper of the West, until I was fourteen ; when our pirates were taken and hanged, and I was saved because I was so young, and tried to save the old harper. He was set on shore, and I lived for many a day with the captain of the frigate, afloat and ashore, like his own son ; and if he loved me, it was for the sake of the music that I made him. Well—rest his soul—he's gone ; and I had nothing left me but the harp he gave me, and with that harp I was to pay my way to America, where I hoped to make my way in the world as soon as I became a man. But a kinder fate awaited me, and saved me by your honour's hand, and from that hour I have known no sorrow except yours."

He took my hand and pressed it to his lips.

“But one thing, they used to vex me about at Beaumanoir, and that was about my Irishry, as they used to call it; and they used to pretend they wondered I hadn’t got a tail, and a long knife, or a harp at least.”*

And so I began to think that the harp would be an offence to you. But I found this poor thing (and he laid his hand affectionately on his harp) weeks after the wreck upon the shore, and I cured its

* In the “State of Ireland,” part so reed to Queen Elizabeth in 1599, among the matters requiring “reformation,” we find the forbidden “maintaininge of Irishe harpers, bardes, and the like in the Pale, provinge that the Irishe behaviour is too perfectly lernede.”—*Vide Sir John Harrington’s Nugæ Antiquæ*, p. 141.

hurts as best I could, and I was wont to play by the hour on the lonely shore, till the fishermen swore they used to hear mermaids singing there. And when I thought I'd be wanted at the house, I used to hide my poor Irish harp away among the rocks, where I made a bed of rushes for it. When I followed you to the wars I left it, in my haste, behind me; but the Lady Zillah, (the only one who knew of it, and used to listen to it) had it sent after me to Oxford. And I still had the idea that it would be Irish, and hateful to you, so I kept it secret still. But after the battle of Newbury, when I was lying ill for near a month, I took to it again, and the people near me got so fond of it, that I thought I'd make use of it in making my way to you, and so I did. For when poor Blount came back to Oxford, (and who can tell

how he made his way there through the enemy, for he has more of the lion than the fox in him, good man), and told us he left you prisoner, they tried to exchange you against any two prisoners the rebels had ; but some devilment made them refuse, and then the Prince swore he'd come and rase the castle to the ground, but he was obliged to wait till spring. So I got leave, and started in search of you, and the Prince called me Blondel, or some such name, and swore he'd have me knighted if I got you free ; and I swore if I didn't, that I'd never see his face again ; and away Blount and I travelled.

“ We had hardship and danger enough sometimes, but we got to the house of an honest man near Nottingham, a farmer that Blount used to buy hay from, for the troop ; and he gave us shelter. Well, Blount

would go on to Beaumanoir, for, said he, 'I must do the master's bidding at all risks, and I daren't see his face again until I do it.' So he went away home, with his prisoner's pass, and I didn't tell him what I heard, that you were ill of fever; but I wrote it on a scrap of paper to the Lady Zillah. And I told her you'd be lost if she couldn't come to you, and that I had found the way to the chapel, close by to your prison, and that I would be there every night after dark.

"Well, blessings on her heart, she came to the castle, and I saw her in the same chapel, and we had all things prepared for your escape the night of the storm. Indeed, I believe, if the truth was known, the Governor's lady was not sorry to be rid of you; for she suspected some foul play from that villain, Hezekiah, who was always hovering

about you like a raven ; and she knew that an order for your release was signed long ago. You know the rest."

So ended Bryan's story. I then told him everything relating to my altered circumstances, and concluded by informing him that for good or ill, I was determined to revisit that which was once my home. Bryan declared that such was his best wish, too, and that he never would return to Oxford until I did ; come weal or woe.

"Nothing is easier," he exclaimed with animation "than to get home, at all events. I've got the knack of the people's ear now, with this old harp and some psalmody that's growing almost as dear to me as to them, only I'm obliged to put it a little through my nose when I sing the words. Now, I think, your honour must leave that most excellent Devil here ; for he's too hand-

some, and besides might get killed, on us ; and as we're in no great hurry, sure we can walk the distance easy in three nights. And once we get in sight of the old woods of home—whoo ! I'd like to see the Round-head that can lay hands on us."

So it was settled and so done. Our jovial and generous Cavaliers of Newark did everything that kindness could dictate : more than one of them was anxious to accompany me, but of course I declined their offer.

It was on a fine frosty afternoon, on Christmas Eve that we began our expedition. Bryan was dressed as when he entered Nottingham ; I, in a forester's rough garb, which was well-suited to the weather and our walk. I pass over the various incidents of our march as uninteresting to the reader though to us then seeming very important. Bryan gave himself out as old General

Lesley's own harper, and none of those who entertained us were able or anxious to detect any error in the musician's assumed Scottish accent. I carried his harp, whenever we entered a village, during daylight ; and for his sake, I always received rough and homely, but kind welcome from the cottagers.

At length, with a heavy heart, I saw the dawn break over the tall woods behind the stately old house that I so long called my home. As we advanced, I saw the sea, and then the turreted roof rising between it and me. I was already in my boyish haunts ; I could soon see those of my feeble childhood. Nothing seemed changed ! A slight shower of snow had fallen during the morning, and veiled all vestiges of ruin. We still walked boldly on until we reached the verge of the wood, whence a wide undulating lawn sloped downward to the house.

There we paused. My eyes were dry ; for my grief was too solemn for tears, as I looked out upon the scenes where I was now a trespasser. The spot where my mother lay tranquilly at rest ; the place where my brave brother had fallen in defending what was to him his home !

Looking up to the right, my eyes wandered over the steep woods, and rested on the castle tower where Zillah slept, —slept, I hoped, then forgot her earthly sorrows in her heavenly dreams.

I looked at Bryan, he was on his knees ; his eyes were full of tears, and he seemed praying heartily. He was a Papist, poor fellow, and able to comfort himself by praying for the souls of the departed.

Suddenly he started to his feet,—dashed the weakness from his eyes, and exclaimed it was time to be going. It was a moment or

two before I could realize the idea of danger there,—on the very spot where my pale mother used to sit and watch the sunset lights upon the sea. But the sun was now shining brightly over the snow, and Round-head warders on the turrets below were casting their first cautious glances round them.

We moved away noiselessly to the right, higher up the glen, and in about a quarter of an hour we came in sight of the cottage where Blount's old father had lived, as forester, for more than half a century. Bryan advanced cautiously, singing one of Sternhold's undelightful melodies very nasally. The sound seemed to be unpalatable to the cottagers, for almost immediately Blount's bearded face appeared in anger at the window, uttering angrier words. But the singer went on, and was soon recognized, and

pulled inside the door, which was closed behind him with a hearty bang.

Soon after he returned, and alone, for me. My sturdy servant was standing in the shadow of his house, blubbering like a child, and trying to swear at his wife, who, with a Frenchwoman's readiness and address, advanced to welcome me. Blount, poor fellow, had no welcome to offer; his tough heart was too full. I shook him vehemently by the hand, and entered the little apartment where they lived; there I found the old father as upright as his age-bowed form would permit, with both his hands outstretched to greet me.

An hour afterwards, Blount was to be seen with a face grinning joyfully, bustling about to make things comfortable for me. At one moment, he was trying to assist his wife Rosine in preparing an excellent

breakfast—correcting her bad English in worse French, and swearing at, and blessing her, alternately. Then he would rush at a large oak chest, and tumble out all the old linen to look for sheets, shirts, every thing that I could want. And at length when I was fairly seated at a savoury mess of stewed rabbits, and he had nothing else to do, he took down his well-battered carbine, and began to look it over, as if it must come into immediate use. He seemed to think that I was there for the sole purpose of storming the Manor House and restoring everything to its old footing.

“I’m afeard though,” said he reluctantly, “we must wait till night. Though there’s only a score or so of them, these rebels keep a sharp watch, and know how to defend them-

selves. But the moat's froze over, and that's a great thing; and Simnel is just come back from Lincoln with one of his ale barrels full of powder, and that's a great thing—and, in about two hours' muster, we can put together—let me see, ay, fifty men, as good as ever trailed a pike. Pooh! we'll have your honour at breakfast in the oak parlour to-morrow morning, as easy as ask for it."

While the zealous trooper thus went on, I confess a temporary gleam of hope had passed through my mind. I did not, indeed, doubt for a moment that we could recover possession of the old house. But then I knew how vainly! The whole country round was in the hands of the rebels, and another fight would only expose my people to still greater distress than they had already suffered for

us. Alas ! *my* people did I say ? Well ! in my heart of hearts they will be always mine.

Bryan watched my countenance eagerly, as these thoughts passed through my mind, and gradually his hopeful looks subsided into sorrow and regret.

“ My trusty Blount,” said I, “ I am not come to disturb such quiet as this poor country can enjoy. Nor have I, except as the King’s officer, any right to do so now. But Bryan will tell you all about it, and meantime I would fain rest an hour or two in those white sheets that your wife has so pleasantly arranged on yonder bed.”

And so saying, I retired to an inner room ; as much to spare myself the pain of seeing Blount during the explanation with Bryan that was to follow, as to rest.

CHAPTER XVIII.

When need is highest
Hope is nighest.

OLD PROVERB.

WITH all his fidelity, Blount had been always rather a wilful and wayward personal attendant; but now, when I came forth from my welcome rest, I found him respectfully and almost tenderly officious. He did not trust himself to speak, but in his own rough way he showed his feeling for my fallen state, by a service that was almost homage.

Nor had he and the indefatigable Bryan

been idle whilst I slept : the former had been snaring rabbits, (an old trick of his,) and the latter inveigled a dish of trouts out of the brook, frosty as it was. The Round-heads had so harried the few loyal country people, that there was little other food to be had ; Blount's new wife, as he called her, possessed a French woman's admirable talent, however, in turning wild herbs to a good account, and I supped royally.

Nor was good ale wanting, wherewith to wash it down. Blount, an old campaigner, had plied his summer's soldiering with some advantages ; and though he was wise enough to keep his little store of gold a secret, his friend Simnel seldom visited the county-town without bringing back some comfort to cheer the trooper's home and his father's old age.

Now,—after as much experience as most men, of the vicissitudes of life,—I am con-

vinced that a man in difficulties can only take a fair view of his situation, and of its chances, after his appetite has been satisfied. When the bodily functions are tranquillized, the mental are at liberty to act solely for themselves, and to look the strong world boldly in the face. I therefore set myself to think, steadily and almost complacently, after I had well supped; and when my humble friends, with ready tact, had retired into the adjoining apartment, and left me to my own company over a pipe of good tobacco, and a brown jug of foaming ale.

It may appear strange to the romantic reader, that I should have been able to enjoy such things then, or that I can dwell upon them now: those, however, who have seen as much of the outside and inside of worldly affairs as I have done, will not think these trifling matters unnatural, or even incon-

sistent. I must now, however, beg him to accompany me to very different scenes and personages from those of my humble cottage.

Scarcely half-a-mile away, across the brook, and beyond the wooded steep, rose the proud towers of a castle, looking loftily down upon many a glade and woodland, sloping to the sea. But about the castle there were many signs of neglect, if not of decay ; grass was growing where grass was never meant to grow ; rails and fences were overthrown ; the marks of cattle-hoofs had almost effaced the trim gardens, once sacred to ladies' feet ; everywhere was visible the withdrawal of a master's eye and care. The day's brief sunshine had in part effaced the snow ; it only lay about in streaks of dreary white, on which the laurels and yews looked dismally

black as daylight gave way to January's disconsolate twilight.

By the side of the broad avenue leading to the castle, was a leafless arbour formed under an old beech tree. Beneath its scanty shelter stood a muffled figure gazing intently upon a lighted window looking eastward towards the arbour. Some powerful emotions were at work within him, for that large frame trembled whenever a shadow from those inside the house passed across the window's light.

That within—that arch-panelled room—is well remembered. It has been, in turn, the nursery, the school-room, and the bower of two of England's loveliest daughters. It was once enriched with flowers, and all bright ornaments prepared in hours of ingenious idleness by fanciful fingers. But now it looked almost as forlorn as the outward

aspect of the castle ; and of those within, the beauty, though still beautiful, is grown sad and sorrowful. One wears a noble yet delicate form ; slender yet finely developed and symmetrical. An indescribable, harmonious grace surrounds her, from the rich dark hair bound round her marble brows, to the hem of the dark robe that swept the inlaid floor. Her cheeks were wondrous pale, and the light of her large lustrous eyes with the shadow of their long drooping lashes, increased the spiritual character of the countenance. But then there was a roseate mouth and dimpled chin that were sweetly mortal and which, though saddened now, could surely bring forth delighting and delighted smiles for sunny hours.

The other sister's form and face seemed meant altogether for mirth and happiness ; yet 'twas now the most mournful, and by

far the most melancholy of the two. Those violet eyes, once sparkling with joyful fancies, were dimmed and sunken. Those auburn ringlets, that used to curl so richly round the rosy cheek, are now drooping and lustreless, and that cheek is very wan. Poo Phoebe sits at Zillah's feet, and rests her aching head upon her sister's knee, watching earnestly the workings of the countenance that shines above her, and apparently endeavouring to derive strength from its inspiration.

Those two poor girls are motherless now. She whom they had lost, had not perhaps very numerous sympathies with her children, but with the blessed name of mother every thing on earth that is holiest and tenderest is inseparably combined, especially when she is gone ; and nothing can supply her place. Soon after our house had been stormed,

when its new Roundhead garrison had begun to levy severe contributions on all around them, she had fallen ill. The reputed share of her husband in Waller's plot afforded an excuse for every species of annoyance and spoliation of his family: day by day, the good lady's cherished stores of household linen and worsted stuffs—even her poultry and her fatted lambs, were claimed and carried off by the insatiable troopers. The poor housewife-heart of the lady was rent and torn by these spoliations—this ruin of a life-long industry and pride. She succumbed to her sickness, and when she died, she had scarcely enough left of all her once-boasted linen to make her shroud.

And now Sir Janus appeared to be suffering sorely under the same system of extortion. Fear long kept him a prisoner in

his chamber, and all his remaining energies had been employed, it was whispered, in hiding away his more ponderous valuables, and transmitting his available funds to foreign countries. He now only waited for an opportunity to abandon the castle, of which he had been so vain ; and he would gladly have exchanged it all, from cellar to topmost turret, for a safe berth on board of the meanest fishing smacks, at good gunshot from the shore. A vessel had been actually chartered for him at Hull, but somehow those whom this cautious gentleman employed, were never earnest in his service. His money order had indeed been obeyed, and a strong pinnace had anchored off the river's mouth that morning ; but of her three sailors—two declared themselves Puritans, on finding a Roundhead garrison, with plenty of wine, at Beaumanoir,

and declared they would sail no where without Governor Hewson's orders.

Such was the name of the Roundhead officer who commanded the neighbouring districts, and who valued Sir Janus's resources too much to part with them as long as he could help it. In answer, therefore, to a polite message from Sir Janus, requesting him to make the sailors fulfil their engagement, Hewson returned answer that he must first consult the Parliament, and learn their pleasure, before he could consent to the departure of so esteemed and valued a member of the good cause. On receiving this answer, Sir Janus had betaken himself, as usual, to his own apartment and solitude. And his two daughters, forbidden to interrupt his meditation, were consoling each other as best they might. They were both even more anxious

to depart than their father was, for their fears were far greater than his own. Colonel Hewson had intimated his conviction that Castle Bifrons would be the better for a small garrison of the godly, and this was the last evening that their home might be free from such intrusion.

The old chaplain had walked down to the village to hear the news, and the poor maidens having compared all their fears and hopes of escaping, their low mournful voices had now subsided into silence.

Suddenly Zillah started, and listened with breathless suspense and almost awe. At length she whispered to her sister :

“Dost thou remember the strange weird stories that Irish boy used to tell us—of spirits that made mournful music in the air, when the ruin of some ancient house

impended? Hark! again those supernaturally wild and wailing notes—the very voice of Bryan’s Banshee!*

Phœbe had now started to her feet, and was likewise listening, with all the feverish eagerness of long-suppressed and returning hope.

“To me,” she said, “there is nothing doleful—but absolute cheer in those wild strains. Ah! Zillah, do you not recognize them now?”

Zillah replied by opening the casement. The music ceased, but the rustling of boughs was heard beneath the window, and soon the active form of Bryan was seen clinging

* Lady Fanshaw, in her delightful *Memoirs*, gives an interesting account of this Milesian appendage, during her visit to Ireland, a few years after our Cavalier is writing.

to the window-seat—the next moment he was in the room.

Half an hour had passed, he had much to tell; for, by my directions, he had told all. He concluded thus: “We arrived this morning at old Blount’s cottage in the glen below; and, though my Lord lay close all day, we heard, at nightfall, that the rebels had got tidings of him, and would harry the whole estate before morning, or they would find him. Now tell me, Lady, is your father capable of making one bold effort to save you and himself from these marauding villains? I know all about him and the pinnacle, and everything. There’s one true loyal man aboard of her, and I’ve made friends with him; his two comrades are up at the Manor, swilling the good old wine that’s fit for princes. Now if you, and

those that are to accompany you, can be down within the hour, by the Black-rock, where the water's deep—you, and my Lord, and all, are saved for ever. Nothing is easier ; my Lord and I can manage the craft with the pilot already aboard of her, and by Heaven's favour and good guiding, we shall be half-way to Holland before day."

The feasibility of this project was evident as well as the necessity for its instant execution. Zillah felt so strongly the contagious power of the young Irishman's cheerful confidence, that she determined to let him try the same influence upon her father. She knew the old man would be startled by such a sudden and bold measure ; and if Bryan's light-hearted and confident manner failed to inspire courage, she knew that all must be in vain. Notwithstanding all prohibition, therefore, she entered her father's chamber, and

to his great astonishment, led Bryan with her.

“Your pardon, Sir Janus,” said the young man, “but I had business of such importance with you, that I thought I’d venture to intrude ; and indeed it won’t be long before the rebels—the gentlemen I mean at the Manor down there—will be paying you a more unceremonious visit. In short, Sir Janus, they hear that you’ve secreted a whole pot of gold ; and, as all things are given to the saints, they think that all that you’ve kept from them is wrong and robbery. Now you see, my Lord and I are going to escape in the pinnace below there, which nobody else seems inclined to make use of ; but as you paid for her, I thought it would be only courteous to inquire if you had any commands to make, or any little valuable to send to a place of safety.”

During this address, poor Sir Janus listened with open-mouthed astonishment ; the cool daring manner of the lad impressed him favourably, however, and he replied almost without anger,

“ But, young man, this pinnacle that you speak of is mine—purchased by my money ; ay, and at no trifling risk.”

“ Then why, in St. Peter’s name,” exclaimed Bryan, “ don’t you go to sea in her and escape ; if not for your own sake, for that of the ladies here. Nothing is easier now. The rebels are all busy at the Manor, collecting their forces for a grand expedition in search of some “ malignants ” that are lurking hereabouts. In an hour’s time, the tide will ebb, the shallop will be waiting at the Black Rock ; you and yours may be all aboard before the moon rises ; then,—whoo!—who dare follow us ? Come along Sir,” said he, im-

proving his advantage, "pull on these old boots, and look, here is a quiet doublet, and you may as well stick the bandolier over it; ay, and the rapier, to look respectable: and here's your big cloak and hat; and now search out your papers and whatever's most valuable to you; and take no servant but old Sturdy, he's the only true man in your household."

Sir Janus yielded to Bryan's energy, and in sheer timidity took the boldest step he had ever ventured on. His daughters, of higher mettle, eagerly set about making their preparations, and in less than an hour Bryan joined me, with the assurance that all would be ready for our departure. "Except the poor Chaplain," he added; "for the old man swears he will not forsake the remnant of the people committed to his charge. He told the ladies that they were going,

he trusted, to a land of sound doctrine, as well as of temporal safety; ‘but for the children of our Church, here,’ said he, ‘who shall comfort them? Nay, I will abide with them, and finish my pilgrimage where I have begun it. There is no fear for me, dear Lady: alas! I am not worthy to be admitted to martyrdom. Even those who are not of my flock, will reverence my grey hairs, though, in their ignorance, they revile my sacred calling.’ ”

There was no time for further parley between Bryan and me. When the castle clock tolled nine, we were to embark, and Bryan had first to repair to the pinnace to make final arrangements with her pilot and to bring her little shallop to the appointed place. She could only hold three persons at a time; and as the sea was rising, and the night was looking wild, we had

one hour of deep anxiety and of doubt before us.

I returned in all haste to Blount's cottage: he was already gone to the Black Rock with such small necessities as I required. I shook hands with his old father, and wished him better days. I threw a gold chain round Rosine's neck, and told her it was all I had to offer her.

"Farewell, then," said I; "you shall have your husband back within the hour, I trust."

"No, my good Lord," said the old man, in a solemn but firm voice; "she will not see him back to-night, or, perhaps, ever again. He is yours and the King's; and my curse would be on him—even as my heart's blessing is with him now—if he turned back, and that, he will never do!"

I was deeply touched, nay, awed by the

old man's resigned and heroic manner. He had evidently taken what he considered a last leave of his last, his only child, and devoted him to his duty with a cheerful sacrifice. But he was trembling with feelings that overpowered him, and after one more grasp of his hand, I spared him a further witness of his struggle, and hastened away.

CHAPTER XIX.

Loather, a hundred times to part than die ;
Yet now, farewell—and farewell life with thee !

SHAKESPERE.

OUR escape had been planned with all possible secresy and dispatch ; and I soon found that Blount's anxious care for my safety had not rested there. As soon as I had passed the river into the castle grounds, I heard the snatch of a well-known Cavalier roundelay, and about a score of our former tenants, all stalwart and well-armed men, suddenly presented themselves

before me. Their affectionate reception of their disinherited master was painful to me, as I was thus circumstanced; but Blount, at the moment, joined us, and forbade all noise or explanation.

“The rebels are in motion,” he whispered; “and I believe they have left the Manor already. Well, we’ve one-and-twenty firelocks here, and I doubt not we can beat back five score of such fellows as come yonder. Nevertheless, to save risk, we must be silent. The ladies are all on board, and the shallop will be back by this.”

So saying, he moved away at a rapid pace; I followed closely, and the volunteers brought up the rear. I had vainly entreated them to disperse to their homes; they replied that they dared not, if they would ever wish to show their faces amongst their kin again.

We were now approaching the shore; the

woods ceased suddenly to screen our hasty march ; and a long narrow strip of gravel only intervened between the sea and an overhanging range of cliffs. Along this we now moved swiftly and noiselessly ; the night was almost quite dark ; and the moaning of the waves, before they dashed upon the shore, drowned the noise of our footsteps. A few faint stars shone out between the driving clouds, and showed us at length the Black Rock ; but there was no boat to be seen there. Still on we went ; when suddenly the cliffs above us blazed with a volley of musketry, and two of my poor fellows dropped beside me.

“ On, on,” shouted Blount, “ there’s shelter nigh.”

And on we went, till we found ourselves under the protection of an overhanging rock, round which the bullets shot fast, but

harmlessly, into the wet sand. Another quarter of an hour, and escape would be in vain ; the sands are left suddenly bare along this coast, after the first hour of ebb, and it is only at some distance that the lightest craft can float.

I thought of poor Bryan's feelings with anguish. His reluctance to leave me ; his responsibility to the precious freight he had on board ; his remaining perhaps too long, and finding his boat stranded, while the pin-nace would be left with no second hand to guide her when we had fallen ; as these thoughts flashed rapidly through my mind, I saw the shallop shoot from behind the Black Rock, as if to show itself, and then retire. Now was my time or never : the rebels were pouring down the cliff, and would soon surround us. Once more I implored,

nay, commanded my men to retire, and leave me, as my last chance of safety. At length they reluctantly obeyed; but as if to prove they did so from no coward fear, instead of returning homeward, they dashed up the almost inaccessible cliff, and I soon heard their muskets ringing on the heights.

Nor was their diversion of the enemy's attention without result. The greater part of those who were descending to the shore now scrambled back again to join their assailed comrades, evidently supposing that I had led that charge in person. Blount and I took advantage of the momentary pause, and rushed across the open towards the boat; three Roundheads attempted to withstand us, but they fell, and we cleared the rock. By this time a young moon had risen, and showed us that numbers of people had

assembled on the shore—the friends and followers of both parties, women as well as men.

“ Now,” shouted a voice from the shallop, as it shot in beneath my feet.

Just as I was descending, two powerful men rushed up to us ; one closed with me ; Blount encountered the other. A stroke from Bryan’s oar left me without an enemy, and at the same moment Blount gave a shout of triumph—but it was a faint one—as his enemy also fell. The gallant fellow then tottered towards me, exclaimed, “ God bless—” and fell lifeless there.

I scarcely knew what happened afterwards. A roar of musketry I recollect ; and Blount’s brave, honest head upon my knee, and then a woman’s shriek, which I remembered long, long afterwards. I believe Bryan lifted me into his boat ; I was too stupified with grief

to be conscious, until roused by the spell of Zillah's voice.

And now the helm is down, and our pinnace, laid close to the wind, is standing boldly out to sea. The night is looking wild to windward; the sea is still rising, and the little craft bounding onwards gallantly, but as if it was an effort to her. The spray now bathes the deck at every plunge, and the ladies and all the useless hands are persuaded to go below. The night looks angrier as the hours wear on, but my thoughts are still with that sad sea-shore, where the loyal and the true have died for me—where my poor Blount has found that there are eyes, after all, that will weep for him.

Poor, desolate Rosine!—after all thy faithful following, thou art there to perform that office for thy rugged, but noble-hearted

soldier ; to shed the tear that his tough heart in a moment of weakness yearned for. Nor will thy sorrow be alone ! That brave old sire will mourn heavily, but proudly, for his true-hearted son. And when his gray head is laid beside him, as I trust full soon it may be, thou, poor wife, mayest wander back to thy far home beyond the seas—proud and happy to thy last hour that thou hast such a husband to remember,—and to meet again.

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Our bark bounds boldly on—through stormier winds and seas. We hand sail after sail, and reef to our last points, and we have but shreds and canvas now straining to the gale. Every man, save him at the helm, is crouched to windward under the weather-boards, except at the moment when to tack

requires every hand and nerve. The sea rolls in over our decks, and sends its spray aloft, high over our masts ; but still the little bark, true English heart of oak, rides onward bravely into the very teeth of the tempest ; and the three storm-beaten figures that guide her, look often into the careering clouds a-head, but never backwards towards the fatal shore that *was* their home.

Still onward we drive, until a blazing fire, lately visible on our lee, has sunk below the horizon ; and then we calculate we are out of sight of land, and steer our straight course for Helvoetsluys : the wind is now upon our quarter ; our gallant little bark now seems to fly ; and when the longed-for daylight breaks at last gloriously over the waters, the storm seems to fail and die away before it. Then, as with easy and gratified

movement we swept along over the subsiding swell, we had opportunity to offer each in his own heart's fashion, our thanksgiving for all the perils we had been permitted to survive.

Another hour, and the sea was calmer still, and the deck was dry, and Zillah and Phœbe were reposing thereon side by side: Sir Janus still preferred his seclusion; and the servants, as is their wont, were sick to death, in the forecastle. The wearied pilot now readily obtained leave to take some rest; Bryan went forward to look out, and I was left at the helm, alone with the two sisters.

One look was sufficient for Zillah's greeting; but I shook Phœbe's hand with a brother's fervency—and forgiveness. Then followed many questions, and at length, the sad story of the previous night. Zillah wept in silence for poor Blount, but Phœbe

to my surprise, listened without a tear; and when I ceased speaking, she exclaimed,—

“Oh! how I envy him; how I envy even that poor lone woman, who could press his dead body to her faithful heart, and say, ‘it was true to him to the last....’ Alas! it is only the true-hearted who deserve the happiness of dying for those they love!”

Zillah did not interrupt her sister; but after some short silence she said, with a sad, sweet smile, “Comfort yourself, dear Phœbe, it may yet be *our* lot; we all have something left to love, to live—and if necessary, to die for. But we will not speak of that just now. Does it not seem as if yesternight had receded into a year’s distance. Twelve hours ago we were sitting calmly and despondingly in the window, and that harp sounded, and a rapid succession of

fearful scenes followed ; it is now as difficult to recal them as a dream. But that terrible moment, when they began to fire from the cliffs upon you, and when all appeared to be lost—that moment seems to expand itself until it oppresses all other recollection.”

I was deeply gratified to observe that Zillah now avoided as much as possible the Puritanical form of speech, which used to be as it were another language ;—a Babel by which Hezekiah had contrived to confound our once happy intercourse.

“Thank Heaven !” I exclaimed, “amongst all we leave behind us, that dark-browed fanatic is also left, upon the soil he has so ably assisted to distract.”

Zillah looked grave ; she was silent too, and she did not meet my eyes. But soon she entered into confidential and most pleasant discourse on all that had passed since

we had parted; even to the last words of the old Chaplain who had waited on them to the boat.

Bryan suddenly interrupted our conversation, with a cry of "down with the helm, and throw her up into wind; there's one of Warwick's cruizers off the blue line of shore, and if they're as much awake as we are, we shall have a hard run for it." Whilst he was thus speaking, he had kicked up the weary pilot, and jumped aft to haul in the sheets; the next moment, he was up aloft—handing our small topsail, and having made all snug, he resumed his watch with an earnest and unblinking gaze. Our small low craft had fortunately escaped the cruiser's observation, and we were soon able to resume our right course.

That day we received no further alarm. The time flew but too fast. I almost
t

grudged the hour that Bryan whiled away with the sweet music of his harp. The next morning found us in sight of the low coast of Holland, but considerably farther north than we had intended. Before dark we had run into the little fishing village of Schevening, near the Hague, and disembarked our precious freight.

We easily found hardy sailors to help us to lay up the little craft in safety. I expected to want her again ere long; and Sir Janus, in his delight at finding himself and his wealth secured, enabled me to reward her faithful owner beyond his highest hopes.

CHAPTER XX.

Holland, that scarce deserves the name of land,
As but the offscouring of the British sand,
And so much earth as was contributed
By English pilots when they heaved the lead ;
Or what by th' ocean's slow alluvion fell
Of shipwrecked cockle and the muscle shell.

ANDREW MARVEL.

* * * * *

A land that rides at anchor, and is moored,
In which one does not dwell, but goes "on board."

BUTLER.

THAT evening we procured a light wagon to transport our passengers and freight to the Hague, and had soon the comfort of finding ourselves in one of the best

and cleanest inns in the world. I need not describe the gratitude we felt for our deliverance and restoration and security and comfort: the poor frightened ladies especially; for I fear that a long succession of hairbreadth escapes had rendered Bryan, and even myself, less thankful for and observant of such blessings than we might have been.

The Hague is called "the largest *village* in the world," containing more inhabitants and greater wealth than many cities of repute. It maintains, however, a sort of village character for gossip and idleness, engendered by the absence of all municipal institutions and occupations that keep citizens busied about their own affairs. Originally a hunting-seat,* it seems still a sort of chase, where

* In the Dutch 'Sgravenhage, or the "Count's Hedge," which fenced round the hunter's house.

every Dutchman comes to hunt out whatever he wants; honours, water-works, fashions, preferment, and above all, news—are the principal objects of pursuit; the sportsmen are unexcitable but indefatigable, and the game, though small of its kind, is very plentiful.

England, and English news, at the time of our visit, possessed the greatest interest. The Dutch were curious to learn how their Puritanical and Republican doctrines fared; they were anxious to know how their investments of capital were turning out, for in this they had a double interest, having lent money to both parties. Public feeling, or opinion, I should rather call it, was pretty equally divided between our two contending armies. All those who sided with the Prince of Orange, sided with our King; all those of the opposite party leaned towards the Round-

heads. But none of them seemed inclined to carry matters to the extremes, and the repose that was apparent in this matter, formed a most pleasant contrast with the excited feelings that then divided England. The Dutch impartiality in one respect was marvellous. Justice herself was never less a respecter of persons, or more blind to prejudice, than the Dutch magnates to the cause of those that borrowed, provided the security were good. At one hour, Mynheer Jan Van Dyke was advancing fifty thousand pounds on the crown jewels to provide powder for our King ; the next hour, in the same office, Mynheer Peter, his brother, was signing an undertaking to provide cannon and shot for the Close Committee.

Amongst such people, the arrival of our party created a considerable sensation. Public rumour magnified my presence into a

confidential mission from the King ; private conviction, founded on the deposit of certain weighty packages at the great goldsmiths, greeted Sir Janus as a grand plenipotentiary from the Parliament. That we should both dwell in the same inn and even have arrived in the same vessel, appeared little extraordinary to the tolerant and phlegmatic Hollanders. Wonderful anecdotes concerning our departure from England, had gradually risen from our pilot, through the fishermen of Schevening, up to the Court. Bryan, who was by far the most accessible of our party, amused himself with enhancing and embarrassing these marvels ; and at length the interest of both Court and Exchange, became concentrated on our inn.

Not only the known wealth of Sir Janus, and my supposed prowess and great importance, but an interest, more deeply-seated

still, even among the amphibious Dutchmen, enhanced all this. A report of the wondrous beauty of the two English ladies, had gone abroad and agitated all the Grafs and Gräfinn, as violently as their nature would permit. Henceforth, crowds beset our dwelling, and numerous visitors disturbed the happiest period I had ever known.

For as long as the sense of danger was still tingling in Sir Janus's memory, he thought he could never see me near enough; the strangeness of his new life to him, and the loneliness he felt in the presence of unaccustomed chairs and tables, made him still anxious for my society, even when he was at length convinced of personal safety. Therefore, I lived almost entirely in Zillah's company, which every hour became to me more precious. Then I discovered, how deeply her high and ardent intellect had

been imbued with the noblest errors of the Puritans. So purified and exalted, however, had they become in passing through the medium of her mind, that I could have almost become a convert to them myself. At least I then learnt toleration for all who possessed such principles as Zillah had consecrated by her approval and adoption.

Yet still this singular woman, though she treated me with perfect confidence, had the power to keep me at a distance. A thousand little sympathies that it would have been happiness to share with her, were acknowledged but not fostered. Ofttimes a burst of feeling rose upon her lips, but died unuttered there; oftimes an emotion, common to us both, would fill her eyes with tears and make her very heart-throbbing visible; but it was soon mastered or suppressed.

I know not how I might have felt, or

what I might have done, had I still been the Lord of a dozen manors, but as I was now circumstanced, I was diffident even to timidity. I was too happy to be allowed to remain, even in that probationary state, and I thought with bitterness on the fast-approaching hour that was to recal me to England and my loyal duty.

So it fared with me for the first few days after our arrival at the Hague. Sir Janus had not sufficient energy ; I had not sufficient inducement to leave the house. Bryan alone was indefatigably restless ; never weary of examining the strange people and their customs and places of business, and haunts of pleasure. In a wonderfully short space of time he had learned some of their language, and made for himself so many acquaintances that he never used the table of the inn.

But the change of scene and freedom from

anxiety, soon wrought a surprizing change in Sir Janus, and through him, in all our circle. Pleased and flattered on finding himself a personage of curiosity and attention, he began to frequent the public walks, at first in company with me, and at length unattended. From returning salutes, he gradually came to converse with such of the wealthy merchants as understood our language, and at length he accepted an invitation to dine with a rich goldsmith, to whom he had brought letters of large credit, as well as sterling coin for investment. This was the first day I dined alone, but afterwards, I discovered that my society had ceased to be necessary to Sir Janus. He returned from his dinner with a large acquaintance, which increased rapidly, and soon left me but a very moderate share of his attention. His daughters, however, refused to see any strangers on account of

mourning for their mother, and I was to both of them, therefore, at least as welcome a companion as ever.

Phœbe had profited almost as much as her father had done, by change of air and scene, and her joyous youthful spirit began sometimes to peep through her melancholy, like snow-drops through the snow. She strove especially to win my confidence, and need I say that she succeeded; I could cherish no feelings towards her but pity, tolerance for her childish folly, and sorrow for the part that she had played. I resumed towards her my old demeanour, and she grew daily cheerfuller and brighter, and more like herself.

One afternoon, while Sir Janus was strutting up and down in the public walk, I was sitting with his daughters in the window of our common room, observing and commenting on his different acquaintances. Zillah,

however, soon retired to her embroidery frame, and I had followed her with my eyes, when I observed Phoebe start and point with an alarmed look towards her father. He seemed as if he had trodden upon a rattlesnake, and was restrained from moving by some fascinated fear. One foot was retired and his cane was in the air, but so he remained, motionless, gazing on a low seat that was unoccupied as it seemed to me. But suddenly what seemed to be a human head appeared from behind it, grinning delightedly at the alarm it had caused, and giving vent to its feelings in shrill exclamations of "keek, keek, keek."

At this moment, my attention was distracted by the entrance of a servant, who announced a visitor under the title of Captain Van Bed-tick. He was immediately followed by a fine soldier-like looking officer,

dressed in the Dutch fashion, and of eminently courteous manners. After a profoundly respectful salutation towards Zillah and Phœbe as they withdrew, he addressed himself to me frankly in very good English, and told me that he was one of the Prince's officers.

"Your reputation, my lord," said he "has preceded you, and His Highness is desirous of making the acquaintance of so distinguished a Cavalier. He had hoped you would have visited him (as to say the truth it is usual to do) but he desires to waive ceremony, and hopes to see you at dinner to-morrow, if not disagreeable to you. The Queen of Bohemia will honour the Prince with her company, and her Majesty having heard of you from Prince Rupert, is desirous of hearing from you of him in return."

To this invitation I had, of course, but one

answer to make; and I now gladly embraced his offer of escorting me to see the town. I found him a most agreeable companion; well informed, and sensible, though sarcastic, especially on the subject of his own democratic countrymen. He informed me that the States were about to recognize the Parliament as a Supreme Power in England, and had sent to treat with them accordingly. In return, ^{*}the Roundheads had sent a deputation to the Hague, which was only just arrived, and which, he feared, boded little good to my King's interests.

“Nevertheless,” he continued, “as the Prince is obliged to be well with all parties, one or two of these fellows will probably dine with him to-morrow. You will find yourself, however, the more at home, being face to face with your enemy, and surrounded by your friends.”

Bentinck, for so was my new friend called, took leave of me at my own door, and I was immediately joined by Bryan, who led me aside with an anxious countenance, and told me he had some news to communicate.

“That evil destiny incarnate, Hezekiah,” said he, “is here or not far off, I’m sure of it. I be just seen that unnatural dwarf of his hunting about for us like a little spaniel; and he had fairly set Sir Janus in the long walk when I came up to his assistance. Now I’ve a plot against that little chap, and all I want to know is, what questions I’m to ask him if the devil that possesses him should allow him to tell truth for once.”

I contented myself with expressing a desire to know what was Hezekiah’s motive in coming to the Hague, and whether he had been aware of our being here. I strictly

enjoined Bryan to do the poor dwarf no harm, and endeavoured to persuade him that he might be a Christian like himself, and was certainly a fellow-creature, though in sad disguise.

Bryan smiled somewhat incredulously at this supposition, but he promised to treat him as kindly as if it were true, and departed. I continue the story of his adventures as I learned it from himself afterwards.

By dint of very respectful language, he had prevailed on little Rabshekah to give him a meeting ; and the poor creature was stalking to and fro very impatiently at the appointed place, when his new friend appeared.

“ I have some secrets of importance to tell you,” said Bryan, confidentially ; “ and it is better, therefore, that we should adjourn to a house where they sell wine, and where

we may be private; for in truth it is a pleasure to meet an English gentleman in these foreign places."

"Be it so," said Rabshekah, condescendingly; "I love not the company of wine-bibbers or riotous eaters of flesh, in ordinary; nevertheless, as good company may perchance profit thy unhappy and malignant soul, I will even accompany you; yea, and look patiently upon the wine though it be red within the cup."

In a short time this singular pair were seated by a table, engaged in confidential conversation; Bryan's face, and merry but keen eyes, sobered down into not altogether mock interest in his companion's discourse. But ever and anon he passed the sparkling wine across to him, and pledged his health often, to stimulate his growing conviviality.

"Well," exclaimed the little man, throwing

one little leg over the other, and contemplating his brimming glass complacently as he held it towards the light; "well, it is not often that men with state secrets in their heads have time to relax and recreate themselves after this fashion. Verily, this wine is good, and thy demeanour pleaseth me, young man."

"It is too much honour for me," Bryan replied, "to keep company with the confidant of —"

"Never mind, never mind," exclaimed the dwarf, looking nervously all round him; "it is better not to name any, for verily names do oftentimes seem as if they conjured up those spoken of."

"'Tis a pity," observed Bryan, "that a spirit such as yours was thrown away among those canting Roundheads: you would have made a right roaring Cavalier surely."

“ I should not be the first of our family who did so,” said Rabshekah, grandly. “ My brother, Sir Geoffrey Hudson, has received the honour of knighthood for his loyal services.”

“ Then I have the honour of addressing Master Hudson, the elder, I presume ?” asked Bryan.

“ Yea, though men now call me Rabshekah,” was the reply. “ Little Goeff is but a younger brother, and a sad falling off in the family. I do not know how he came to be so diminutive ; he’s a good inch shorter than I am.”

Gradually wine and vanity won their small empire over the dwarf, and he became communicative on every conceivable topic, except that to which Bryan desired to bring him. At any approach to the subject of Hezekiah,

his little satellite looked round with an alarmed air, and deprecatingly changed the conversation: but Bryan was not so easily to be foiled.

“Who are you looking for?” he demanded, angrily; “do you expect to see a ghost, or is it that black-browed ranter who has put the coward into a heart like yours? Cheer up, my jovial comrade; I can answer for it, Hezekiah is safe enough in England; and is too good a place for him, bad as he and his friends have made it.”

When the dreaded name was fairly outspoken, and the owner of it not conjured up thereby, the dwarf took courage and another beaker of the tempting wine.

“What knowest such as thou of the movements of our great preceptor?” he said, scornfully. “Within the last four-and-twenty

hours, I tell thee, he hath landed at that red-roofed Nineveh, which is called Rotterdam, by those who fear not to use that swearing name. He is even now busy expounding to the big burgomaster saints that dwell therein. I have already sought that man of two minds, Sir Janus, at Dort and Delft, when I found them not at Nineveh. Do you know," continued the dwarf, who was beginning to speak thickly, and to swing about upon his chair, "do you know, that if I did not deem too highly of the preceptor, I should almost guess he had an eye upon one of the Amalekitish women for a wife."

Bryan laughed scornfully, which seemed to rouse Rabshekah's spirit vehemently.

"Ha ! mockest thou ? Verily, thou hast but little cause for such crackling of thorns, and she whom he shall wed shall have far

less. But he cometh, he cometh at the first hour of the night, and I must be at the appointed place, even by the Park bridge, to meet him. Keek, keek! I shou—ld like to se—ee him if he fou—nd me not.”

The poor little man laughed loudly at the idea of such a disappointment, and in his delight rolled off the chair, with a heavy bump upon the floor. He tried to rise, but the wine had done its fatal duty too effectually; he lay there, almost unconscious of anything.

It was now growing dark, and Bryan thought he could carry him out without observation in his cloak. Accordingly, having paid for the wine, and pointed out to the waiter the not unusual appearance of his comrade, he sallied forth with him, and deposited him softly on his own bed at our

inn. There the poor dwarf slept soundly, and Bryan hastened to the bridge, to observe the effect of his absence upon the Puritan's movements.

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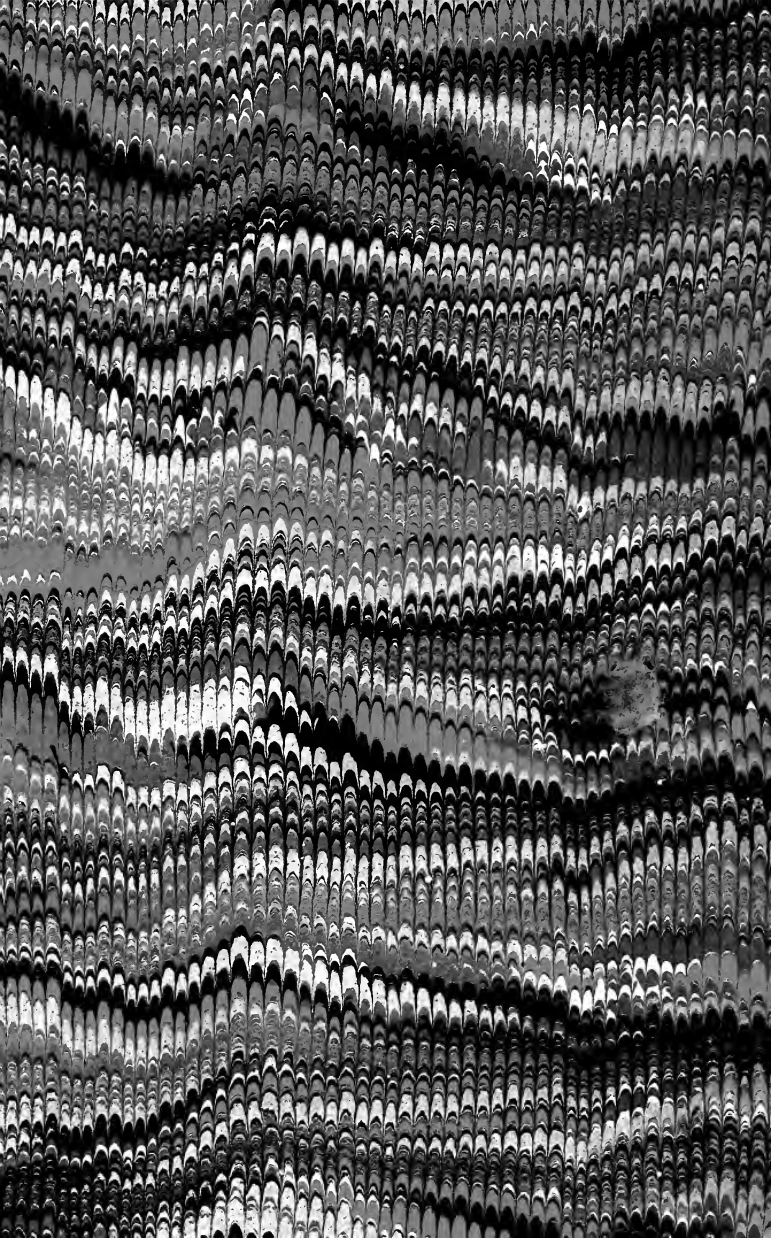
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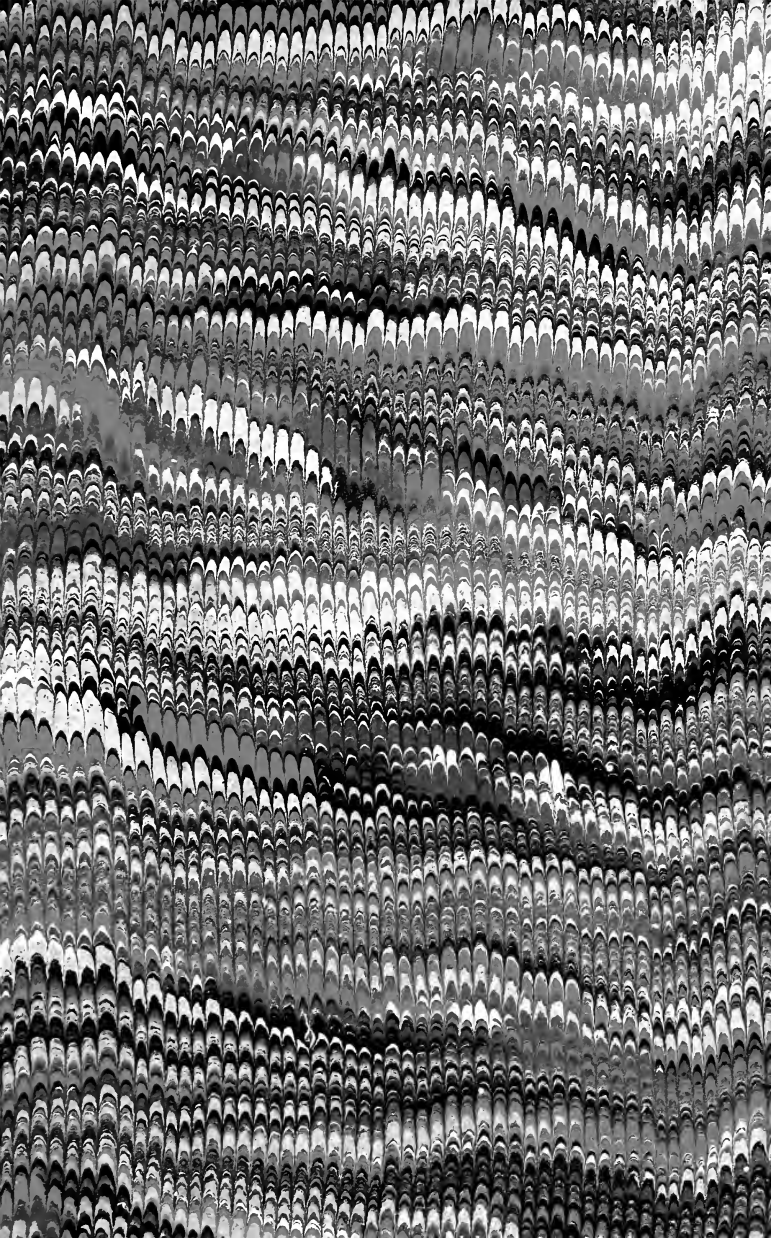
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